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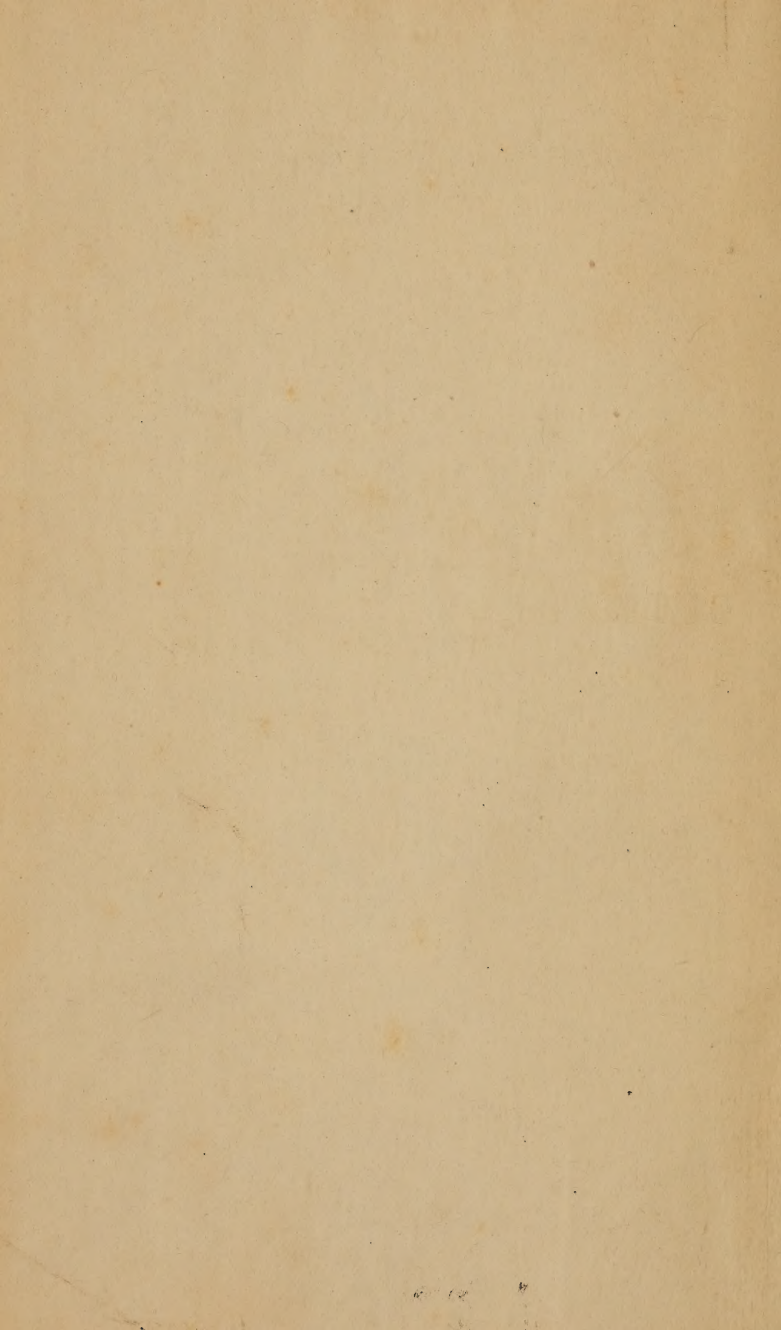
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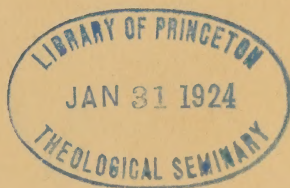
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Outlines of theology



OUTLINES OF THEOLOGY

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BY

ALEXANDER [✓]VINET

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NOTE BY THE PUBLISHER.

THE reader will bear in mind that the following volume is composed of extracts from the various works of M. Vinet. These extracts are very skillfully put together by the Editor, M. Astié; but in a book thus constructed, some instances of repetition and of abrupt transition are unavoidable. If even there should be a slight discrepancy between passages brought from different works into an unintended proximity, the reputation of M. Vinet, a writer distinguished for his clearness of style, ought not to suffer from this.

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FIRST SECTION.

MAN AND THE GOSPEL.

CHAPTER I.

MAN.

- I. *Conscience defined and its present condition described; God and the Conscience: the functions of the latter.*

WHAT is Conscience? It is not, as it has been too long defined, the light by which we judge of the value of any given action in an abstract and objective point of view; were this the case, it would appear variable, uncertain, and dependent on local prejudices. Conscience is that secret voice which condemns whatever we do against our internal conviction.

Conscience—that mysterious and divine element of our being, inseparable from our nature, that nothing explains but that everything attests—conscience is that moral principle that urges us to act in conformity with our conviction, and condemns us whenever we act in opposition to it; it is, so to speak, the mainspring of human morality.

Now this conscience, by which I mean this instinct which urges us to act agreeably to our conviction, whatever that may be ; this conscience is for man the first of all laws, or rather the only true law. The term *conscience* is generally applicable to that internal sense or instinct, by which we judge of the merit or demerit of our actions.

What, indeed, is conscience but the impulse that leads us to do the will of God, and to be like him ?

There is in every man, so long as he is not completely brutalized, an inexplicable sentiment which, eluding as it does all analysis, should be considered as a primitive fact of our nature ; it is *that of a necessity to make our actions harmonize with our conviction*. I do not say the necessity to do this or that definite action : here we have already a more complex sentiment, implying certain relations and circumstances. Conscience conceived of in this second sense, is not strictly uniform in all men ; nay it is liable, in different individuals, as well as in different countries, to divergencies for which materialists and Christians have very different explanations.

Conscience is often confounded with the moral law. But this moral law being a body of notions, a complex object, combining itself on one side with feeling, on the other with external things, is for this very cause mutable, and has been much impaired by the fall of man. Conscience on the other hand being a simple object, an elementary fact, has

remained unimpaired. It is nothing but the sentiment of obligation, in its greatest purity, and most perfect abstraction.

Would you have an illustration of conscience in man? An ungrateful son carried away by the intoxication of pride, and seduced by perfidious counsels, escapes from the paternal roof to enjoy an independence which has been represented to him as the greatest conceivable happiness. He ventures out into the world without support as without consent. His disorders and excesses, even when not amenable to the severity of social justice, everywhere betray his real character of a rebellious and unnatural son. But in the midst of aberration something still proves that he sprung originally from a good race; some happy choice of expressions in language; something of refinement in his manner; even in his conduct some worthy impulses which contrast with his life as a whole; in a word, some traces, hard to obliterate, of the early habits of a man well born and bred, accompany him even into those places and that society where this merit is least appreciated.

Thought, I mean moral thought, the thought of the conscience, is the man himself.

Conscience and reason are neither the whole of man, nor the whole of religion.

Conscience is not the will, it is its bridle and its rule. Conscience is the root of all morality.

It is amazing that there should be in the soul

something besides the *Self*. And with what right, for what purpose is it there? What is to be made of it? Is not the *Self* all? Does it want that *Not-Self*? It would rather appear that it is the *Not-Self* that requires the *Self*; it appears that it is not within the soul's option to receive or decline this guest, even to ask it the reason of its presence. It is there, that is a fact; it will ever be there, this we feel; it claims empire to which, spite of ourselves, we submit. This *Not-Self*; this inalienable associate of the *Self* that would fain dispense with it; this duality of the human being, this unknown which disturbs so fair a unity, has given, and still gives, untold trouble to philosophers. The eternal problem that occupies them is the reconciliation of the *Self* and the *Not-Self*. They have constructed several systems on the subject, but they are only systems.

In a sense it is impossible to cease believing in virtue,—I mean in the necessity, the sanctity, the inviolability of duty; it is impossible to one who has once fulfilled it, were it but in one isolated act, not to find in the impression made on him by that very act, the proof that virtue is a reality, the greatest of realities. But I maintain that the more invincible this conviction, the more insupportable is it to the soul to be unable to solve the difficulties raised by the presence of this great idea.

Conscience—inalienable possession which constitutes the identity of the moral man, since deprived of this organ man would be man no longer—con-

science has remained unalterable, to be the basis of his restoration. It is on this foundation that God reconstructs man.

What is there that has not been affirmed respecting the divergencies and aberrations of conscience? And yet it has none, it can have none according to our conception of it! People have quoted the instance of the savage who kills his aged parent from a sense of duty. This perversion of intellect horrifies us; this degradation makes us blush; we see in it a flagrant misapprehension of natural feeling and of moral law. But for all that it is not conscience that is impaired; it retains all its entirety, only it is profaned; it is an excellent talent employed in the service of crime.

The light of conscience is the same for all; for all alike the way of duty is easily discernible. The moral law is a simple thing; it shines into the eyes of the soul as the light of the sun does into the eyes of the body, and there is no more effort required to open the former than the latter.

In the actual condition of the human race, retracing its history as far as we possibly can, we find, indeed, moral sentiments, and a general idea of the just and the unjust; but their applications vary from age to age, from nation to nation, we might almost say from man to man. These divergencies require a uniform and sovereign rule. Man is impelled by his very conscience itself to seek for this rule elsewhere than in his conscience, which does not afford it him.

Nor is this all; conscience is nearly allied with the *Self*, that is to say, with all our affections and all our interests. By right, conscience is the indwelling guardian whom we maintain at our own cost, to watch over and take account of our actions; but we distract this guardian, we bribe him, we associate him with our interests, we seat him at our table, and make him drain with us the intoxicating cup; he identifies himself with our passions, espouses their cause; forgetting his character of judge, he becomes our partisan, and only from time to time remembers his own special function. Conscience might have been our rule, had it been more distinct from self, and we had been less liable to enrol the idea of duty in the service of passion. But humanity was not long in discovering that conscience, sometimes neglected, sometimes suborned, seldom obeyed, was for the most part a mere *titular property*, with expenses far exceeding its revenues, and that we must seek outside of self for aid against self.

What was to be done then, since man keenly felt that his will, instead of serving him as a rule, itself required ruling, rectifying; that his will, in short, was not good? Nay, he went farther; he understood that this did not exhaust the question; that more was wanted than the making his will good; that this will was evil by the very fact of making itself its own object; that, in an absolute sense, *to will* does not belong to man; that our will exists only to accomplish another will than ours; and that

it is in the interest of that will only that we ought to act ; in other words, that it is God that ought to will in us.

Conscience determines the whole of our conduct in its most varying relations ; it is as it were the opening of the *Ætér* of human life ; it may suggest and enjoin the most opposite actions ; it is, indeed, difficult *à priori* to point out any which are absolutely incapable of being referred to a principle of conscience ; for, since the Fall, conscience has ceased to be, as a rule of conduct, always the same in different men and different places ; nothing perfectly identical remains in all souls whatever, except the elementary and abstract sentiment of obligation, so that the inviolability of the individual conscience in all its possible applications would entail, nay, would imply even in principle the annihilation of society. But, on the other side, in the negation of conscience the moral being perishes altogether ; and in the hands of society nothing remains of man but a species of *caput mortuum*, or insipid dregs. This negation does not take place when society represses or punishes certain actions contrary to the principle of its existence, whether or not these actions have been enjoined by the conscience of the agent ; but it would be implied in a refusal to allow conscience to assert itself in asserting the truths that it believes, and that form the basis of its life.

Conscience is indolent ; it soon falls asleep, and wakens with difficulty ; indeed, to rouse it from its

slumber, nothing less is required than the roaring of the mighty billows of divine wrath.

Conscience requires assistance, and to watch, to control, and to reprove it when needed, is to assist it.

In all men conscience is more or less obscured; all, created upright, have sought out many inventions; all have a divided intelligence, because their heart is divided; for all morality bristles with difficult questions, whose thorny seed is found in the recesses of a deceitful heart. The good, the true, the just, are no longer self-evident; we have lost the spontaneous insight and discernment of the soul; and a simple-minded man would never guess how much, in certain circles, may become the subject of formal discussion amongst intellectual people.

It is very true that conscience is ill informed in many men, but how much better they are than those who have none! At least under some form or other, the sentiment of moral obligation does live within them; when their ideas are rectified they will walk in the paths of real duties with the same firmness that they now walk in that of imaginary duty, and their conscience will then be of use to society. But those who injure society are the men—very intelligent and cultured it may be—in whom all principles are effaced, all affections extinguished; in whom strong convictions and deep feelings only provoke a smile of contempt; for whom the difference between good and evil is only a scholastic distinction, and who, in their whole

conduct, private or political, have no counsellor but interest, no inspiration but external circumstance.

One conscience has something to teach another conscience. All, though equally capable of illumination, are nevertheless not illuminated equally; and in this sphere, as in all others, he who knows least is called upon to ask advice from him who knows most.

Since man is, God is; the image reveals the original; the shade denotes the object, the impression refers to the die; so soon as there is a being who thinks God, God is; the devils even, who tremble at him, attest him by their trembling.

There are but two realities; God in himself, and the thought of God in man. In proportion as this thought vanishes does all reality vanish with it.

The authority of conscience is recognised, is often spoken of as actually experienced, and yet men sometimes stop there. This is inconceivable indeed! Separated from the thought of God, conscience is in our nature only a freak, an enigma, a non-sense. Well then, it is upon this footing that the majority admit it; you may even meet with some men in whom the idea of God's judgments and of a final responsibility is wanting, or, at all events, who reject it, and who yet currently speak of conscience as their internal guide; forgetting that, if conscience has no one from whom to deduce itself, to whom to appeal, if it be not under the jurisdiction of God, it

has nothing positive to say, nothing authoritatively to enjoin.

Conscience is only the permanent and ineffaceable impress of a powerful hand, which having inflicted on us this impress has removed its pressure, or rather from under which an inimical force has torn us away; the hand is absent, the impression remains; and this mysterious impression upon us, of which we are not the authors, leads back every thinking man to a confused idea of God; it suffices to make him infer and search after the absent hand, but is not by itself able to lead him to discover it.

It is well to say and to repeat that there is only one important thing in the world—*duty*, and duty corresponds to God; for without God, duty is a nonsense; a mere creature of imagination, an unfounded idea. All things are important solely in this connexion. Outside of the principle of obedience to God, talent, science, industry, public prosperity, natural glory, all are mere child's-play. If we live, it is for God; if we do not live for him, we have no life.

Right and duty lead us into the domain of impersonality or the ideal.

Right, duty, are the points where man ends and God begins; with them we penetrate into a sphere where man contemplates as his aim something external to himself. Appetite was himself; affection, though more indirectly, was himself still. Here, however, there is no longer anything of self. Right

and duty are another, another *Self* that proclaims God. Now then we are independent of the bonds of the universe and of contingency. We are *free*, we have passed from physical to moral necessity, we have found the essence of humanity. Man is the agent of right and duty.

If it be easy to say, or to repeat after so many, that this mysterious element is a pure invention of legislators and priests, it is less easy to prove it. Man does not invent thus; to invent, with reference to man, signifies to combine. He invents compounds, he compounds; it is beyond his power to invent simple substances; to do this would be to create, and man would be God. Now, I should wish to be told of what substances the *Not-Self* or the idea of duty is compounded; and if it be found undeniable that this is a simple substance, I beg that it may equally be acknowledged that God must therefore be its inventor; that hence we cannot have bestowed it upon ourselves, but must have received it; and that it does not belong to us, but we to it, as we do in point of fact to all that constitutes an essential portion of our being.

What is conscience without God? What is conscience but the organ and the vicegerent of God within us? If we were so unhappy as to have rejected the idea of God, and yet had not denied duty, we should be compelled willingly or unwillingly to make a personality of conscience, and to confer upon it the right over us.

The belief in God is so inherent in the human species, so essential to our reason, that even the most depraved beings have a difficulty in freeing themselves from it. A man is not an Atheist merely because he wishes it; the devils themselves believe in God and tremble.

Conscience is not *us*, it is *against us*; it is therefore *other than we*. If it be other than we, it can only be God. If, then, it be God, we must treat this God as he deserves, and not respect the Monarch less than the ambassador. If God has assigned us an end, that end cannot be outside of himself.

Conscience apart from God is no longer adequate to its functions; we choose between its behests; we tend towards those that are agreeable to our individual character; we end by obeying ourselves. It is easy to construct a morality according to one's own taste and fancy; but the very idea of morality gets gradually fainter and fainter; it must, therefore, be replaced upon the true basis.

Is the voice of conscience, then, *we ourselves*, or something above us? Is that which restrains and conquers us in spite of our wishes, our tastes, our most pressing interests, the *Self* or the *Not-Self*? If it be the *Not-Self*, as we cannot doubt, is it not God? If the conscience be the ambassador of God, can it be possible to welcome the ambassador and repudiate the sovereign? and is it not a mockery to admit conscience while denying God, since if conscience have nothing higher to appeal to, if its

credentials be torn, it will be open to us to dismiss it with contempt? We should be ashamed to insist further on this.

To admit conscience and duty, the just and the unjust as realities, and then to abstract from them the Being who alone is the sanction of these ideas, alone affords them a basis, alone links their sequence to a fixed point, alone, we may affirm, explains their presence in the human mind, and renders them conceivable,—this is surely utter unreason.

Should any one who makes light of God persist in retaining in his vocabulary the words Conscience, Morality, Obligation, be sure you tell him that this involuntary persistence of his proclaims to him a God; that he is his own witness to this truth, and that he cannot too soon place God in the stead of or above these abstract ideas.

God is above conscience; it is to him that our obedience is due, and his divine jealousy will be satisfied with nothing short of it. Whatever be the dignity of conscience—a dignity borrowed from God—God will not be supplanted by conscience. Far from relinquishing any of his rights on its account, far from abdicating in its favour as some seem to suppose, God who wills not that his claims should be liable to prescription, God has sometimes commanded conscience itself to be silent before him. It is upon the idea of his immediate right to obedience that several of the dispensations and decrees of the Old Testament rest.

Our consciences are full of those dead truths that will live when we ourselves live. Now the life of the soul, and of all truths within the soul, is God.

What other seat can you assign to faith in God except conscience, that is to say the seat of moral life?

The God of humanity has from the very first been a moral God, a personified morality, and that which humanity pre-eminently sought in those starry spaces to which the religious glance instinctively turns, was a legislator and a judge. Religion, then, was primarily and necessarily a morality, and at bottom it is nothing else.

Every man attributes to the Supreme Being several qualities, of which he finds the germ within himself; he only adds to each one of them, the idea and halo of perfection. In our opinion it is not this which degrades the worship of the Eternal God. For should we be capable of conceiving his goodness, his love, his very holiness, if no reflections of divine attributes shone amongst men? Yes, in this sense we do realize God in our image, but this is because he first made us in his.

Everything that relates to conscience, touching as it does both God and man, is at once sublime and popular.

It is in the conscience, in remorse, in humiliation, that the germ of our moral resurrection must be buried, that later it may rise thence in verdure and blossom.

Conscience is the faithful and vigilant guardian of its own truths.

It is in the depths of the conscience, in the midst of ideas of duty and obedience, that true earnestness is born; that which has its origin elsewhere is spurious.

The internal guarantee of a duty can only be in the conscience.

No duty ever thoroughly triumphs, except when the heart subscribes to it as well as the conscience.

All the arguments in the world must fail to overthrow this truth, for this truth is a part of ourselves. Even those who would oppose it, bear it within them, and afford a thousand practical proofs of its existence. There is no one who dares to say that it is permissible to contradict his convictions by his conduct.

This *conscience* (its very name shows it) is within each one of us, and is there in its entirety. Thus, in obeying it, we in a manner obey ourselves, each one to himself. There is no such thing as a collective, national, official conscience; conscience is always individual; each one acts according to *his* conviction and in *his* manner.

This inexplicable, intimate individual sentiment is the basis of morality. Without conscience, man would not believe himself to be, and in point of fact would not be, liable to any obligation. Without it, man, reduced to his natural intelligence and appetite, would be merely an animal of a high order; would be man no longer.

Without it, again, there would be nothing to bind the individual to society, or to subject him to laws, except fear and interest. Without it there would be no more duty towards the State than towards particular persons, and social as well as private morality would crumble away.

We may deny or despise conscience; many so-called philosophers have done so, and I do not pretend to prevent others from following their example; but this I do say, if we decide to receive the fact of a conscience we must receive it as it is, and accept its intervention with all its consequences. Now conscience cannot consent to occupy an inferior position; wherever it appears, it must appear as a sovereign. When once we have acknowledged it, we are bound to obey it alone, and in all things, and human laws will only obtain a submission in so far as this submission is enjoined by conscience. And if it so happened that any given law were opposed to that which conscience enforced on us as a duty, we must of necessity obey conscience rather than that law, conscience being above the law, and thus the very moral principle, in virtue of which we obey human authority, would irresistibly impel us to resist that authority.

It has been asserted that the internal testimony, the approbation of the conscience, would of itself suffice to lead men to well-doing. I do not think so; if at the bottom of the conscience, behind it so to speak, the man exposed to calumny does not

distinguish a being superior to himself, a God ;—I do not believe that the consolations of conscience would satisfy him. On such a subject it seems strange to quote Voltaire, and yet even he has said, “My avenger is in heaven.” Yes, we need other approbation than our own ; we need the approbation of God, the harmony between our will and the divine will, the sympathy between God and us. This is the praise that comes from Him, and such praise can only have good results upon our character. Three thoughts invariably accompany it : God is perfect, he only approves in us what tends to perfection ; God is omniscient, and his judgment infallible ; he penetrates to the deepest depths of our nature, the true seat of our intrinsic worth. Lastly, God is a jealous God ; he will have all praise return to him, and he entirely refuses his praise to whoever decrees himself deserving of it, and appropriates to himself the merest fragment of the good he has been enabled to do. Humility is the only decoration that he admits into his presence. Men praise modesty, but if modesty is sincere it is humility. It is therefore at bottom humility that men love and praise. And where is this humility to be found but in him who seeks for the honour that cometh from God ?

Much that has been said about conscience is thoughtless and idle ; in the long-run its testimony does not suffice us ; it is precious only in so far as it certifies us that a judge of whom our conscience is the representative, is equally satisfied ; we need

an approver, and need that this approver should be a person ; we are not content to be merely the servants, the friends, the children of an idea ; we seek to attach ourselves to something more living than *moral order*, to a being, to a soul from which our life may be echoed back, and the most correct name of that satisfaction to which true virtue aspires, is *glory*.

Remorse, marvellous word ! it is fortunate that our fathers should have invented it, for it is by no means sure that we should find it now. Remorse ! the repeated *morsure*, perpetual, incessant, of the outraged law ; its anticipated vengeance ; a wound always open, or rather always opening ; a cruel tooth, which does not remain where it first fastened, but at its pleasure leaves the gash for a while to gnaw into it again, which allows the sore to scar over, that it may make another beside it, so that in every sense, and in all directions, it may bite and bite again into the heart of the criminal.

The voice of conscience tells man very positively that he has need of pardon. Do not believe the indifferent or lofty air some persons put on ; they disguise from you the terrors which perhaps their death-bed will too plainly reveal ; but even supposing they have succeeded in freeing themselves from the fears felt by the majority, still they have *had* to free themselves, and how have they done this ? by avoiding the thought of them ; they are, you imagine, not alarmed at what terrifies you, but they

are afraid of being afraid, which is much the same thing; and when, in spite of their precautions, a glance of theirs escapes in the direction of eternity, what they transiently discover in that abyss freezes them with horror,—the very word Eternity sounds like thunder in their ears.

Conscience is the natural and necessary arbitrator in all cases where reason or interest do not sufficiently enlighten us; the one greatest possible good, namely, that which is conformable and most conformable to the will of God—this is the star that rises to show us our way, when all the rest are obscured. Consequently it must be the only one that all eyes can see, and whose beams are intercepted by no clouds. That therefore which is destined to simplify all things must itself be simple.

II. *Condemnation and Wants of Man.*

God will not put asunder what he himself has joined. Now he has joined together in their ultimate elements, and by their very essence, both sin and suffering, and happiness and virtue. He has so constituted these that they correspond, as do the eye and light, the lungs and the air. He has put into our conscience a fundamental sense of this correspondence, and a conviction that as a matter of fact it must need be that unhappiness and sin should re-unite as well as happiness and virtue.

The union between sin and sorrow is so close,

their relations so intimate, that man seems to have taken charge of the interests of divine justice, and, when drinking iniquity like water, to drink from the same cup the penalty of iniquity.

If every sin instantaneously produced the calamity assigned to it ; if every man was unhappy as far and in proportion as he was departing from the divine order, sin, triumphantly repressed at its birth, crushed in its germ, would never indeed come to maturity ; but sin being impossible, virtue would be so also ; man would no longer have to choose between the infinite joy and the abyss of woe, separated from each other only by the space on which his feet are planted ; conscience would have been given in vain, the Law laid down to no purpose, and, according to the idea of a great mind, God would have been found to have miscalculated and undertaken more than he had executed. But the actual arrangement of the world has nothing in it eternal or necessary, while the correspondence between sin and misery is necessary and eternal.

It must need be that these two halves of one whole should meet and re-unite. The wicked is made for the day of wrath ; that day must rise. In the scathing brightness of that slowly advancing dawn, the only exception to the universal law will disappear, and we shall see all things correspond as well in the moral as in the physical world. Like a dike separating two rivers, the world of sense and of vanity shall suddenly be done away, and

the two streams of sin and sorrow shall rush together, to remain blended for ever. Nothing will disturb the intimate relation, nothing will interrupt the mutual and exclusive companionship of sorrow with sin. Incorporated together, they will thenceforth be one. Sin will have no other aliment than unhappiness, just as unhappiness will have no other object than sin. And thus will the prophetic declaration be unreservedly fulfilled: Cursing shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

In the moral world as well as in the physical, the idea of law includes that of absolute necessity, absolute inevitability, and it is as rigorously necessary that a law should be satisfied or avenged, as it is necessary that the human body should inhale air or die, that a stone left to its weight should fall, that fire meeting with combustible substance should consume it; in a word, you feel that a law which does not take vengeance is no law.

There is in justice something venerable indeed, but severe and imperious; there, if only in the sphere of conscience we find a master, we are tempted to haggle with him as to our obedience, and too often we do so. We would willingly double the sacrifices that are not demanded from us, to reduce in proportion, or to reduce to nothing those that duty imposes; thus we see only too many persons generous and unjust, obliging and ungrateful, munificent and sordid, prodigal of what they do not owe, withholding what

they do, devoted to the objects of their preference, hard towards those who have a claim upon them, odious perhaps in the sphere in which Providence has placed them, admirable as soon as they step out of it, volunteers of affection, deserters of duty, and believing themselves abundantly to compensate by spontaneous and perhaps useless sacrifices, for the violation of their most positive and nearest obligations.

In itself sin ought not to be; it ought not to be, because it is sin. It cannot form part of the moral world, since it is the very negation of moral order, in which everything has been calculated for virtue and not for sin. Sin is precisely one of those things to which nothing corresponds, and which corresponds to nothing; it ought not to be, but it is. You cannot say that it is not, without classing it amongst indifferent things, since you do not, I presume, mean to make it a meritorious thing; and as soon as sin is admitted to be indifferent, virtue becomes so too, and moral order is nothing more than a mere phrase. But this you do not venture to assert, and you confess in the same breath that sin ought not to be, and yet that it is. Now, if you grant that it is, and go no further, you must resign yourself to see contradicted on one point—but that the most important of all—the divine idea which has ordered all things in such a manner as that they should correspond. For here, I repeat, we have a fact that answers to nothing, and to which nothing answers.

The writer of the Book of Proverbs (xvi. 4) does not admit this isolated and monstrous anomaly. With one word he re-establishes order, and is avenged on this insolent exception which pretended to interrupt the universal law. This law is shown to be all-pervading, for, says he, The wicked is made for the day of wrath.

Evil is evil in itself, and independently of all the consequences that it may entail ; but it is no less true, that if in this world and the other, God had not marked sin with the seal of his wrath ; if there were nothing in the fate of the wicked to attest God's hatred of sin in our sight, we could not be assured that he did hate it, nay, we might be assured that he did not. I even maintain, that if God had declared that he did hate it, and still had done nothing further ; or if this declaration did not contain the earnest of unhappiness for those whom it concerns ; if this declaration were not misery begun, it would not place above all human doubt the fact of God's hatred towards evil. Why ? Because the same conscience that tells us that it is not the penalty that makes the sin, tells us also that unhappiness is inseparable from sin, and should bear an exact proportion to it. Because we have within us such a need of expiation, that after a sin committed, we seek every now and then to discover whether we could not escape God's chastisements by chastising ourselves ; that remorse, which is already one form of punishment, proclaims to us

another ; that we feel that sorrow and sin seek each other out, as do happiness and virtue ; that these two things are made for each other, exist for each other, and that sin is the true cause of suffering. No arguments will ever wring this conviction from out the heart of humanity ; it is not the different religions that have implanted it there ; it is that heart which has given it to these religions which have only consecrated and formularized it. How then should it fail to be written in the Christian religion ? We do not believe this religion to be true because it speaks to us thus, for all religions have said the same ; but how could we believe it true if it did not thus speak ? And if we could persuade ourselves that God would not punish wickedness, how from that moment could we believe that he hated it ? And if we thought that God did not hate it, how should we be able to hate it ourselves ? And conversely, how can we ourselves hate it without being certain that God hates it, and believing that he will punish it ?

If God loves good he must hate evil, and if he does not hate evil he loves not good, nor good men.

Evil could not be evil if it did not engender unhappiness ; and in giving up sin to sorrow, God does nothing but yield an object to its own nature, mark it with its true stamp, and declare that evil is evil.

Such as we are, we feel a need to see sorrow born

of evil, and the sinner punished by his own sin. God himself has so decreed ; he has left the chief part in executing sentence upon our misdeeds to those very misdeeds, and nothing prevents our believing, or rather everything constrains us to believe, that the penalty of sin, both here and elsewhere, will be entirely drawn from sin itself, so that the purposes of mercy cherished towards us by God, find their full accomplishment in our regeneration or internal deliverance, which again owes its origin to the gospel of pardon. God, who knows what we are, and what we need, has willed that this correspondence between sin and misery should be constant ; and that this fact might in no way escape our attention, his world, in a thousand different ways, reiterates to man the dispensation so energetically and definitely expressed in the following passage : “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee ; know therefore that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God ” (Jer. ii. 19).

What, in the matter of religion, are the wants of man ? He is ignorant of divine things,—he needs a religion that enlightens him ; he is oppressed by the troubles of this life, and the uncertainty of his future fate,—he needs a religion that consoles him. Lastly, he is a sinner,—he needs a religion that regenerates him.

Man, who according to Holy Scripture lives not by bread alone, cannot live any more on glory and

liberty. Other wants more profound, more vast, agitate him ; he thirsts for God and immortality. Civilisation and science do not change the groundwork of our nature ; in some souls they may indeed divert from the feeling of these wants, but amidst all degrees of civilisation, and in all forms of social life, man involuntarily feels that he is a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth.

It is possible, we own, to invoke the aid of philosophy against the ills of human life. But philosophy, in this case, is only a lofty name given to a very vulgar thing. All that she can say, however variously expressed, amounts only to this : that the world is so constituted, that our complaints will not change its order ; that it is better to bear what cannot be mended, and that our lamentations only widen our wound. Habit is just as wise on this head as philosophy, and it does little honour to human wisdom, to arrive thus by a more or less circuitous and elaborate process to a stupid resignation. All true consolation is a joy ; now there is no joy here, nor can there be any ; all true consolation should exalt, and this degrades us. Ought we not then, in the name of our dignity, as well as in the interest of true happiness, to seek for other consolation ?

Until man has learnt in a quite other school than that of philosophy to recognise that he is unworthy of anything, he does not appreciate what remains to him, but only what he has lost.

The generality of men cannot dispense with the

need of consolation ; nothing can compensate them, nor pass itself off for it. In blunting the sting of grief time does indeed succeed better than pride, for time wears everything away ; but it wears the soul as well as all the rest ; the power of forgetting is only a weakness ; life may be made less sad by it, but it is also less important, less noble ; and even though we may have gradually forgotten all we have suffered, life has no less lost its prestige, for we never suffer with impunity ; illusions are for ever dispelled ; we know what the promises of life are worth, and whatever turn events may take, they will never more find us expecting an impossible happiness.

III. *The Fall and Depravity of Man—Traces of the Image of God, Liberty, Different Degrees of Morality.*

He who would found human life on God, will not be long in recognising—unless, indeed, he reduce God to a mere name—that the relations of man to his Maker are broken, there being no longer any proportion between what the very idea of God demands and what the human heart offers ; between what God wills and what man wills. It is from this idea, or rather from this fact, that morality must spring, under pain, as I have said, of being false morality.

In the person of Adam, humanity committed a crime that each of its members repeats and confirms, so to speak, as far as in him lies. This crime is

that of denying God. But no. It is something still worse ; it consists in saying, There is a God, but I will act as though there were none. Now this crime is fundamental, the parent of all crimes, and just in the same way that man had he not committed it would have committed no other, so having committed it he is capable of all others, for all spring from this one source.

This doctrine of the fall of man, who is there that will receive it ? No one, and yet every one. It irritates human pride, but it finds an echo in the human conscience, and conscience will finally prove stronger than pride. But the Cæsars and all their power ? Their persecution like a hammer will only break the iron into shape on the anvil, the obstacle will become the means.

There are two tendencies in man ; one which impels him towards truth, when truth does not injure him ; another which draws him towards falsehood, when falsehood serves or flatters him. In detail human depravity is fully acknowledged, it is taken for granted even when not openly seen ; but when it comes to re-uniting all these scattered instances into one gradual and comprehensive judgment, the censors of humanity become its most valiant champions, because they feel that blame that expressly aims at *humanity* necessarily includes and compromises themselves. It remains for them to make their opinions harmonize if they can.

Man can neither renounce God nor his sins ; his

corruption chains him to this world ; a mysterious impulse impels him towards the invisible world.

If in his general dispensations, treating peoples and humanity itself as a single man, God seems to take small account of individuals, to fuse them into one solidarity, and without caring for exact assessment, to demand merely a certain total of misery below which his justice cannot descend ; still everything, down to the least sigh, is secretly noted in his divine memory ; the tears of each one are, as Scripture says, put into separate bottles ; no individual suffering exists without a reason, or transcends its appointed purpose, and of all these sorrows not one is lost or forgotten ; order subsisting in the apparent disorder, and triumphing by means of it.

It is necessary, in order to man's existing as a moral being, that sin should be possible, and God consented to this ; and since he acted freely his purpose has not been defeated. But in creating the glory and perils of liberty for man, it was essential that God should beforehand secure his own glory. He had to be eternally and invariably glorified, either in the obedience of the moral agent, or in the results of his disobedience. Order had still to be found intact, whether in the will or in the destinies of man. Voluntarily or involuntarily man had to bend to law. Thus, whether accomplished or avenged, law remained unimpaired, and man in spite of himself obeyed it in every particular. Hence, given the punishment of evil, God is not overcome by evil ; but were evil to

be unpunished, God would be overcome thereby ; and in such a conflict (of which the very idea is impious), Satan would be the conqueror of God !

In the early days of moral life, what an opinion is formed of the sacredness of duty, and, as it were, of the impossibility of infringing it ! What love of purity ! what distaste to all that impairs it ! what surprise at the sight of human weaknesses and perversities ! And yet evil is already there ; the ideal has already been departed from ; our first steps have been falls ; but in that season of thoughtlessness we count not so much the false steps taken, as those we resolve to avoid ! Happy age ! Festival of hope, how soon will the clouds gather over you !

One after the other passions present themselves ; at first we resist, and then we compromise. In this unequal conflict, all that for the most part we can succeed in, is to simplify our defeat and shame, to yield to one single passion which takes the place of several incompatible passions ; we are conquered, indeed, but we have but one conqueror, and we give credit to conscience for a result which is only necessary, and refuse to see that the passion to which we have submitted our life has inherited the might of all those other passions which have given up their claim, so that virtually we have been conquered by them all.

That which is so amazing in man is the empty place where so many great things ought to be ; the sublime flights that end in falls, the infinite desires

that break themselves upon nothingness, the search of the truly good where it is not to be found ; it is, in short, his character of a displaced, bewildered, lost being ; the disproportion between means and end.

There is within us, in spite of ourselves, a witness to the truth, a timid and reluctant witness indeed, but one that a superior force draws from its retreat and compels at length to speak out.

A thousand thousand successive distractions making one long distraction of our whole life ; our natural frivolity, or some pertinacious passion ; these protect us from our conscience. We cross with a firm step by night a path that we should shudder at by day ; for that path was only a narrow ridge between two abysses ; as it was, our temerity itself was our safeguard, and we escaped from danger by not discerning it. But when we are constrained to behold it ; when in the midst of our worldly preoccupations some cause or other snatches us from our illusions ; when the vanity of all that we have desired, admired, loved, overwhelms us with its evidence ; when the meaning of life escapes us, or when it appears formidable ; when, re-descending into the recesses of our conscience, we find there nothing but sin ; when our clouded reason makes us doubt of God's existence, or, left to its own natural lights, proclaims a God of vengeance ; then in this immensity either void of God or full of his wrath, an agony seizes hold of our hearts ; our mind becomes confused and bewildered ; this vast universe is

nothing more than a dungeon whose iron doors resist all our efforts ; the past and the present disgust, and the future appals ; and yet, as though to hasten its arrival, or rather because at any cost we seek to escape from the present, we throw ourselves into the arms of death, never inquiring whether that pretended sleep will not prove an awakening, a more complete awakening, and therefore a more utter despair.

Man does not easily make up his mind to his degradation, and never indeed completely resigns himself to it. He must needs at each step he takes persuade himself that he is walking straight, and from this need of illusion that illusion springs which, if impossible as to the whole, is always possible in detail. We have a general knowledge of ourselves indeed, but from moment to moment we forget it. We despise ourselves as to the sum-total of our actions, and we adore ourselves in each one of those actions in particular.

The faculty of hope, of self-flattery, is not lost all at once ; we are very often caught in the snare of appearances ; we often take the bait, but each time with less confidence and ease, until at length taught by experience we make for ourselves a philosophy ; we reconcile ourselves to accepting as an unexpected benefit, as an exception, what before we had claimed as a rule ; we disenchant ourselves beforehand to escape disappointment ; we hope for nothing, that we may have something to enjoy. As, however, so

great a revolution takes place by slow degrees, it does not bring about a violent revulsion of the soul ; that which, compressed into a description of a few lines, looks like despair, spread over a lapse of years is but the slow chilling of our hopes, and men for the most part are hardly aware of the change wrought within them ; they almost fancy they have always had the same thoughts ; no very keen suffering accompanies the gradual loss of their illusions ; they call this a calming of the spirit, a passing away of youth, a benefit of age ; in short, they are almost ready to congratulate themselves upon it. Nevertheless in certain people circumstances render this same revolution extremely painful, indignation is constantly boiling within their breast, impressing itself permanently on their tone and their looks ; a bitter resentment becomes, as it were, the temperament of their souls. They are wrong in this bitterness, as the first were wrong in their resignation. If we are not to congratulate ourselves upon such miscalculations, neither are we to be irritated by them. What right indeed have we to be irritated at others being what we ourselves are ? Regret would be the right feeling here, not anger. But in the early period of our experience what we know least of all is our own self ; and we have still another undeceiving to undergo before we reach this last undeceiving of all.

If the soul had no want of aliment it would want a pursuit, and this need of action urges it on towards

all aims at once. Although undeceived, it is not cured of this tendency; it cannot be so; the day that this took place would be the day of its death. It hopes as long as it can; when it has ceased to hope it still continues to seek. And it is in the nature of things that as the soul goes on falling, the velocity of its fall should increase; that, in advancing in its course, and incessantly seeing life impoverished, it should attach itself more violently to what still remains to it. Hence it often happens that the most thoroughly disenchanted are those who show it the least, and that those who most malign life seem most assiduously to pay it court; the scorers of the idol are the nearest to the altar.

Man then has sought in religion for the idea or the rule that he has not found in himself, or at least not found as authentic and incontrovertible. But, oh fatal deception, which we might have anticipated if humanity did ever anticipate anything! Humanity bore witness to this truth, but that was all. It did not discover that other and higher will than its own that it seemed to be seeking for. It did not shape its own will to the image of that of the gods, but that of the gods to the image of its own.

Detached from the supreme degree—God—man must needs roll from incline to incline until he reaches the lowest degree, which is his mere individuality. We talk of man in general! But where is man in general? And what right would this uncertain and vague type have to afford a standard for

the duties of man? And with what right could any individual proffer such? In vain does man, having once descended from the summit, cling in desperation to different points on the rapid incline, and remain suspended there a moment; the law of gravitation drags him down to the last step, which is at least a stand-point, a basis of some kind. I mean down to individuality, which, under the different names of character, temperament, disposition, constitutes in its last analysis the real morality of those who reject God.

From thenceforth morality is not the impression of a common type, but the simple portrait of the individual, and far from law serving as a standard to the individual, it is the individual who makes himself the standard of the law.

The intoxication of sin is like that of wine; pain alone, whether external or internal, can rescue the drunkard from his giddiness, and restore him to consciousness.

Whatever in our own conduct tends to make us supreme over ourselves, whatever leads us to revert to self as an end, and constitutes our own will law over us, all tends to dethrone God and to put us in his place; we may indeed be scared by the phrase, but not by the fact, and if at the present day the devil were reduced to renounce periphrasis, we could very well tolerate his expressing himself without circumlocution, and saying to us, as he did to our first parents, *Ye shall be gods* (Gen. iii. 8).

All the world agrees with the friend of Alceste, that we see—

“A hundred things each day
Which might go better in some other way.”

But after this confession, in which almost all men unite, they are divided by two different opinions or feelings. Some, more or less cheerfully, make up their mind to it, repeating after Philinte—“I for my part just take men as they are.” But there are others who, on the contrary, cannot reconcile themselves to this. Human perversity gives them no peace; it is a mystery that persecutes them; they will get to the bottom of it, and never rest except in a system which, whether rightly or wrongly, gives them the key to this moral disorder, of which they are at once the witnesses, the victims, and the accomplices. We know the solution offered by Christianity, and this solution does not come to us alone, it brings with it the reparation of the evil that it explains. As to those who will not accept it, and yet want a solution, they have hardly any choice, and the scarcity of explanatory theories drives them inevitably towards the system of Rousseau: Nature created man good, society corrupts him; we must therefore as much as possible return to a state of nature.

There would be no very pressing reason to introduce God into human life, if that life were to last always; but it has an end, a mysterious end, full of forebodings, full of terrors. Here God is necessary,

the idea of him returns, do what we will ; death brings back that great name upon the scene, and with it returns morality, not that of temperament, but that of perfection.

Let us guard against over-depreciation of ourselves. If we are right in rebuking the natural pride of men, are we not also right in attacking their false and perverse humility? Is there no ground to charge them with sometimes descending too far, and forgetting that, fallen and miserable though we be, we are no less of divine origin, and of the family of God? This side of the question appears to us to be one too much neglected, to which we may restore its just due without in any way detracting from our profound sinfulness.

With relation to man his fellow, man is not absolutely inglorious. Man may present to man much that is admirable, praiseworthy, or at all events estimable. It would be to falsify our own conscience, and to place ourselves in an untenable position, to endeavour in all cases to refuse the meed of approbation to the conduct of our fellow-creatures. In other words, man is often forced to recognise in man something that he is obliged to call virtue.

And this virtue he discovers and admits not only in the Christian whose moral nature has been renewed by the gospel. Far from all admiration turning in that direction, the admiration of men, nay, even of Christians, is very frequently directed towards the natural or unregenerate man.

However unqualified may be the assertions of a mistaken orthodoxy, it is certain that the Christian who is most disposed in theory to refuse all reality and all value to human virtues, practically contradicts himself at every moment. A service received from one of his fellow-men touches his heart; he speaks of gratitude, he is in fact grateful; that is to say, he admits in his benefactor a kind and disinterested intention; in other words, he attributes to the action which gives him cause to rejoice, a value other than that of the personal profit he himself derives from it, an intrinsic, a moral value. His benefactor is something more in his eyes than a well-planted tree which involuntarily bears good fruits; he sees in him a generous will, which, without being urged to it by any outward necessity, has made use of its power and abilities to procure a certain advantage to a sentient creature.

I am well aware that a narrow system may in course of time react upon the soul, and reduce it to its own scale, but still it does not avail to tear out of the soul instincts that are so deeply rooted there, and all that system can do to the intimate nature of the human heart is to reduce it to silence, but not to stifle it.

Here is a remarkable fact that shows all light not to be extinguished in man; he may indeed be influenced by bad motives, but he wishes to disguise them to himself, still less would he dare to assert them in the presence of others, and less still

would he ever venture expressly to propose evil to an assemblage of men, or rather to present to them as a motive the simple, unmixed satisfaction of any given lust. Eloquence would no longer be eloquence, if it did not feign to desire the good, and give the appearance of good to the evil it advocates. It is therefore indissolubly linked with the idea of good. Eloquence is severed from its only root when it separates itself from truth and justice. Even a Marat must needs feign to defend principles, and not interests. Evil is an azote in which eloquence expires, in the same way that it expires in the, as it were, too pure or too rarefied air of speculation.

Evil is evidently more developed, more inveterate, more intense, more various in some than others; some have, if we may so speak, drawn the ultimate consequences from their principles, others have been held back half way. But this should not prevent our acknowledging a much more important truth of fact and principle, which is, that in every sin all sin exists, as the whole man exists in every action of his, as God personally, God himself exists in each commandment of God.

A moral creature placed under any other conditions than those of liberty, would be an inconceivable anomaly, and I venture to say that we should be better able to comprehend the existence of the brute than that of man.

The gift of liberty establishes a great difference

between man and all other creatures. These last cannot lose their nature without a special dispensation of their Creator. But man, by making a bad use of his liberty (and the very idea of liberty includes the possibility of a bad use being made of it), man, we say, may deteriorate his moral faculties, reduce his forces, corrupt his nature, nay, corrupt it to such a point as to be perfectly incapable of filling the design of his Creator.

Between the creature unendowed with liberty and the creature endowed with it, there is a distance that neither the eye nor the thought can measure ; they have nothing in common, except indeed the fact that they are both created. God only accomplished his work, God only reached the term of his creation, God only rested when he had given birth to liberty, when the divine liberty had created the human, the sovereign liberty the dependent, when God had made man in his own image. Beyond that we may boldly say there is nothing ; for though it is doubtless possible that there may be beings better dowered, more richly provided than man, what are they essentially ? Free and spiritual as he is.

Convinced as we are that humanity is fallen, we do not allow that it has become alienated from all moral sentiment ; we think we discern through its corruption traces of justice and benevolence, brilliant traces sometimes, to which we cannot refuse the tribute of admiration ; in a word, we believe that man is not denuded of all glory as regards man.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOSPEL.

I. *The Conscience and the Gospel.*

If the gospel had not been given to man, we must needs have died ; yes, died of grief at having been condemned to live ; died of grief at having been formed with an insatiable desire of perfection, and an ardent thirst for God ; and yet feeling that this thirst and these desires are only a cruel deception, a fatal sport of that unknown power which has, without consulting us, thrown us into existence.

So long as the conscience, with its sad and earnest voice, fails to take part in the concert raised by all the other human faculties chanting in chorus the praises of the gospel ; so long that gospel is neither accepted nor understood. Christianity is essentially the religion of repentance ; it is by repentance that it would lead to love.

True religion is necessarily an appeal to conscience. It addresses itself to the conscience of each of us, and founds in the very centre of the individual a system of relations in which God suffices to the individual, and the individual to God ; no element

being taken from external sources. Humanity and the world are left out of the question. With regard to God the individual is a whole world, just as God himself is the only object of the individual. It is with his own soul that the man listens ; with his own conscience that he adheres and believes. Faith is not a loan he has contracted from the multitude, nor a formula imposed upon him by authority ; it is inherently his own ; it is born of him or in him, it is a fruit of liberty. The development of his faith has no other origin or other nature than his faith itself. All the life that proceeds from it has the same character of spontaneity, it belongs to him, it is of him as is his faith. The torrent of general ideas has not brought it to him, nor does that torrent sweep it away. Born of itself, it is dependent only upon itself or its divine principle. It is proportionate to that alone, not to the development of intelligence or the culture of the mind. It triumphs in the most simple existence, it makes a man, commonplace in other respects, a complete man, a living unity in the midst of other men, eminent perhaps by their faculties, who only count as fractions in the great social unity. It invests him with a dignity that nothing can equal or replace ; nothing, not even genius.

Christianity in drawing near to us, addresses itself to the healthy portions of our nature, and would unite with them, if between it and the true man there did not interpose the false, the man of sin.

Humanity is blind, but it has a confused recollection of having seen; it is an exile, but from time to time some fugitive reminiscences speak to it of a lost country; or—just as two or three casual notes cannot be recalled without reproducing a melody we have heard of yore—so certain outward circumstances and certain internal impressions cause muffled chords to vibrate in the soul, which waken the memory of some divine concert and then fall back into silence.

The gospel lies hidden at the bottom of every conscience, that is to say, that inner gospel which would indeed be nothing without the external, but without which, on the other hand, the latter would be equally vain. For the Word has always spoken, the Word has spoken to all, and when the Word made itself flesh, it was to come “unto his own.” There is then within us, in the innermost depths of our being, would we but descend thither, something which bears witness to the gospel, which although incapable of announcing it beforehand, is capable of recognising it when it appears.

If it were possible to characterize a religion by a single word, we should say that Christianity is the religion of the *conscience*. This is indeed its distinctive character, and one of the signal marks of its superiority. Different religions may appeal to different energies of our souls. This religion may take hold of the imagination, that other has its seat of empire in the feelings; a third may pretend to sub-

jugate the reason, but the triumph of true religion ought to be that of reigning over conscience.

The religion of conscience is the only one that gives personality to God. The gospel is the conscience of conscience itself.

Christianity is the conscience exalted to its ultimate degree of strength.

II. *Person of Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ and Christianity—Humanity and Divinity of Jesus Christ—Systems respecting him.*

It is not to Christianity, it is to Jesus Christ that we are to go.

True Christianity exists nowhere as a whole, if it be not in Jesus Christ ; we may conceive it, indeed, in its entirety and in all its beauty ; but we never realize it either in our hearts or in our lives. And yet the little that each true Christian does realize, little though it be, is divine and incomparable. We stand still in amazement before this imperfect sketch of a marvellous picture ; we recognise the touch of God himself in this unfinished work ; one single Christian moment is of more value than the whole of an unchristian life, and Christianity, even in weakness, and the general decadence of faith, is a living seal stamped upon humanity which continually proclaims that God is not far off. To history, system, Christianity itself, let us prefer Jesus Christ ; let us be Christians by immediate intercourse with him,

instead of contenting ourselves by being so through familiarity with doctrine and knowledge which relate to him.

It is as a fact, a person, a new creation, that religion is presented to us in the gospel. The fact is the starting-point; the foundation and substance of all its teaching. Accordingly, Jesus Christ did not say, "I show the way, I teach the truth, I impart the life," but, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6). Let us not then, as is too often done, put Christianity in the place of Christ. To be a Christian is to belong to Christ, to live with him, to have fellowship with him. It may seem strange to say this to Christians, but it is necessary to bring it home to them.

God does not send out a messenger to seek for us; he comes himself, he unites himself to us. Instead of saying to us, Come up to me, he descends to us. This is the essential, the central point of revelation: *Immanuel*, this is the first and the last word of Christian dogma. It is this word, received by faith, that becomes the principle of life in God.

It is not humanity, as such, that could ever have supplied to humanity the image of the new creature; it was necessary that this new creature should be realized in an individual, if at all; for even if one could, by collecting all the finest "traits" that the history of mankind furnishes, compose out of them the idea of the new man, still it would only be an *idea*; but even such an idea will never be furnished

by humanity ; one will never find either in the individual man, nor in mankind collectively, material for the idea of the new man ; because the principle which creates this new man exists neither in this or that separate personality, nor in the aggregate of personalities.

It is only in Jesus Christ that you will find both the God who is in nature, and the God who is above nature ; the God of the universe, and the God of your own souls ; the supremely holy God who pardons nothing, and the supremely merciful God who pardons everything ; the God who bestows the first and the second birth, the God we need, a perfect God.

We must not make any mistake here. That image equally gentle and majestic, the idea of Him whom modern times have learned familiarly to call the good God, does not naturally appertain to the thought and imagination of man ; it is the gospel that has conveyed it to the mind : this good God is a revealed God.

What I need is a God-man. It is too late, after eighteen centuries, to exclaim against such language ; what before that time would have been on the part of human imagination a thought as profane as presumptuous, has become the truth. God has been made man for our salvation. The eternal essence submitted itself through love to the conditions of time and space ; in a word, an idea became a person. God, so to speak, localized himself ; earth has known him in the form of his Well-beloved ; the God of

eternity, that God the thought of whom makes us reel, is become the familiar God ; the august but intimate friend of each soul ; the silent desert of infinity has been animated ; the future is made present ; life has felt and tasted beforehand its own perpetuity ; we have distinctly discovered the sacred borders of our heavenly country, the threshold of the paternal home ; we have learned to call the Invisible, the Omnipotent, the Infinite, by the name of Father ; we have direct, particular, and constant relations with him ; we have spoken with him face to face as a friend speaks to a friend ; we have confided to him, with the certainty of being heard, the wants and sorrows of every day ; in a word, we have had a personal communion with a personal God, and, at the same time, he remains no less the infinite God for the imagination, the awful and holy God for the conscience.

Jesus is the sun of the world of spirits. There is in human life, without him, nothing but darkness and despair. No way that leads to God, no knowledge of God, no solid consolation, no hope ; and for the only guide of life, only chance, fancy, and the most contradictory impulses of the most opposite instincts. He who can desire to put out this sun is the enemy of humanity, and cannot have—no not even in that infernal world where only hate is possible—a more pitiless and cruel enemy of his own happiness than himself.

The mad, the impious war that the spirit of the

world has declared against Jesus Christ is a war to the death. But the world takes care to keep back part of its intentions. It is not always good policy to give one's-self out openly as the enemy of Jesus Christ. Although the true friends of Jesus Christ have never, in any age or country, constituted the majority, yet there is throughout Christendom a prejudice in favour of him—shall I say a species of faith, which is not true faith, which does not include love, but which cannot help being startled at the first thought or word of a deadly war against Christ?

There is a general and confused sense of a need of Christ, a consciousness that were he removed, there would be—one knows not how, but one is quite sure of it—a deep and horrible blank left. Thought has its adventurers, as it has its heroes, and never perhaps has it had so many as at the present time. But have you not observed that while overthrowing Christianity by their arguments, they yet dare not entirely separate themselves from it, and that it is in the name of Jesus Christ that they declare war against him? The cynical incredulity of the last age is no more in vogue; Christianity is believed to be nothing more than a phantom, a name; but one must take count of that name, that phantom. Nor is it to-day only, but from all time, that the Adversary has found it answer better to him to seek to diminish than to annihilate Christ.

Jesus Christ and his feelings are one and the same mystery, one and the same truth; and where-

ever men have succeeded in depriving him of one ray of his glory, the loss of that ray has produced a total darkness, amidst which you hear as it were the sorrowful voice of humanity exclaim : "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Nothing limits here below the truth proclaimed by Jesus Christ. In it we see all of God that we can possibly see ; it is a relative plenitude, but truly a plenitude ; in the manifestation of God in Christ nothing is wanting that man in his mortal flesh needs to find there ; this manifestation is as full a one as it can be for human beings before their transfiguration into glory.

It is an eternal law, confirmed by the experience of all ages, that one can take away nothing from the plenitude of Christ without proportionately lowering the idea of the Christian law ; and similarly, that it is impossible to try to infringe that perfect law without being urgently impelled to lower Christ from the throne on which our faith had seated him.

The great interest, the great passion of the human heart, until entirely conquered by the truth, is to reduce Jesus Christ to be only a name ; and, diametrically contrary to John the Baptist, who found such delight in saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease," our heart, even after it has confessed Christ, keeps continually repeating in an under tone : "Let us do everything to make him decrease, while we ourselves increase."

The divinity of Christ, the incarnation, is Christianity itself, and it is evident that it can be nothing less. It is more easy to repudiate it altogether than to give it a subordinate place, a secondary importance in the gospel system. For him who admits *Immanuel* or *the Word made flesh*, the whole is there, and this doctrine is henceforth to that of redemption what the containing is to the contained.

The instinct of humanity has not been mistaken. Having set out from a true principle, it may indeed have been inconsistent, and have followed it out ill. This is its habit, but at all events it has started well.

We have seen, and still see, grave divines embarrassed by this dogma, as by a superfluity,—as if God would have revealed any useless mystery to men! They have sought to elude declarations too express and urgent, and have not discerned that it was the ballast of the vessel that they were throwing overboard, and that such rationalism at once rendered Christianity irrational. For if it become rational by repudiating all mysteries, in other words, by disavowing its own self, one mystery the less renders it so much the less rational. Man receives the whole truth more easily than a portion of the truth.

I have spoken of the *essence* of Christianity, but as regards the very existence of this religion, the dogma of the divinity of Christ is not less important. This dogma at least *maintains him his place in*

the world ; this place, even though empty, announces and recalls the absent ; his true name still pronounced, guards him from oblivion : that name is almost himself.

Jesus taken away is truth removed out of the world ; is the arch of moral ideas deprived of its keystone ; is human existence, society, the progress of civilisation and intelligence, reduced to nothing more than a fearful non-sense ; is—above the silent ruins of all that we have done, and all that we have been—the god of evil raising his infernal laughter, long suppressed, but now bursting forth in the universal desolation.

Do you repent having embraced Jesus Christ, or do you congratulate yourself to have met with him ? Are you happy to know him ? Do you at heart feel that you would be unhappy to know him not ? Well then, beware that he be not snatched away from you ; for little as you may enjoy his possession to-day, to-morrow you would be fearfully miserable at his loss ; and doubt it not, to let him be diminished is to lose him.

Christ is the way, in the sense of those words of Pascal : “ Rivers are ways that march onward, and bear us whither we would go, nay, even whither we would not go.” Christ is a moving way, transporting us thus according or contrary to our will. He does not content himself with tracing by his word an immovable road through life ; a road which, however straight and safe it may be, is perfectly useless

to the feeble child. He animates that way ; moves it ; changes these stones and this dead earth into rapid waves ; launches upon this river-road the happy cradle of the new-born ; becomes himself, to the weak, movement, life, and strength. And it is by this complete system of graces, no one of which could suffice without the other, that he opens out in our soul the source of a new moral life, and the treasure of a perfect light which no false glimmer will ever be able to replace.

The Holy and the Just, the worthy object of the delight of the Eternal God, accepting the whole of our condition, life and death ; and in life all that was most hard, in death all that was most bitter ; accepting, I say, all,—sin excepted ; the Son of God combining in his person, together with all the sorrows of humanity, intimate and ineffable sorrows that humanity has never known ; this is that last effort of love which man did not and could not expect, and which was to break down the hardness of his pride or to declare it incurable ; this is the sign which was to make manifest and unite the elect ; this is the travail which was to re-form upon this earth a family of God.

Nothing but the imitation of Jesus Christ enables us to penetrate into the secret of his thought and of his heart. Without this imitation he must ever remain an enigma for us. Even prayer without imitation would fail to unite us to God. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.”

It is easy to grasp a truth, to understand it, to be convinced of it; it is less easy to apply our hearts thereto. For one person who conscientiously believes the divinity of Jesus Christ, there are many who only believe in it intellectually. The most difficult and most rare thing of all is to believe in it with our heart, and to keep this truth at the root of our life. This kind of faith is, however, the only one essential; for if, having the belief, we lack the feeling; if we are content to believe that Christ is God, without possessing him as such, we have only one formula the more in our mind, without our moral being having gained anything thereby. The truth remains external to us; and in matters of religion no external truths are possessed or really known. In order that we may possess or even know a truth, it must be one with us; without this we may have the name to know it, but yet we know it not.

Christianity is the free dispensation of a merciful God, who places his glory in saving sinful man, by resuming his own proper place in man's heart. The method he has chosen is the incarnation, by which the divine essence unites itself to the human in one mortal flesh. This mystery is consummated by death, without which the incarnation would be insufficient. It brings the Divine Word to dwell, under the name of Jesus Christ, among men; the Son of God and of man speaks, teaches, and gives his person as an earnest of the truth of his words; at this price he obtains the right to be believed; his word saves

us. He is at once the messenger and the pledge of pardon. His Spirit is its seal. The regeneration that his Spirit operates is pardon realized, and has for starting-point the *belief in pardon*. Of all those who thus believe there is formed a purely spiritual communion, proclaiming the personality of God, celebrating the spiritual worship which encompasses the whole of life ; honouring the man in the Christian, and thus restoring humanity to its true nature.

All systems respecting Jesus Christ, successively extracted from the gospel, are nothing but difficulty, obscurity, anguish, barren toil, so long as they are systems only ; the most sublime and necessary speculations upon him are withering, are fatal.

We may divert ourselves from Jesus, may depart from him even while thinking of him. In this case, it is no longer the person, but the idea of Jesus that we have before our eyes. We argue about him as about an idea of which he is the name. We often name him, but this is only taking his name in vain. We contemplate but the form of the object, not the object itself. We act like those who, fixing their attention upon the size, weight, shape, and colour of a fruit, should forget that it is nutritious and full of savour, and thus throw it away, having only weighed, measured, described, or painted it. This is not the way, or at all events this is not the principal way, in which Jesus Christ should occupy us. To be exclusively occupied with him thus, is tantamount to not being occupied with him at all ; it is to fill

everything with his name, his idea, and with nothing more. Would you think profitably of your Saviour, look at your Saviour.

Let us leave to this Divine Mediator whatever he cannot communicate to us ; his divinity is his alone, but his humanity is ours ; the virtues that he made so resplendent on the cross are human virtues in their perfection ; they are intended for our use, proposed to our meditation ; these examples form part of our inheritance. Well then, his whole life bore the same character as his death, faithful, obedient, patient, charitable ; this he was without intermission from the first day that his personal history brings him before us. But this was not sufficient for us ; even as an example, his death, with all its characteristics, was indispensable ; without this, the virtues of Jesus might have passed for limited ; his example, perfect in itself, would have been imperfect by the imperfection, if one may so say, of situation ; we should not have known all of virtue that the human soul is called upon to display ; we know it now, and it is Jesus Christ who teaches it us ; but without the cross he could not have taught it.

III. *Work of Jesus Christ—Life and Death of Jesus Christ—Redemption and Reconciliation—Mystery of Love.*

The rupture brought about between God and man by sin, the reconciliation between God and man

effected by the life and death of the God-man : such is the historical and supernatural basis of Christianity, its very definition, its breath of life, the source from whence springs all its greatness, strength, and uniqueness.

God himself makes himself one with man ; God descends into humanity and identifies himself therewith. It is he himself who is the victim. It is God who makes himself a man, or rather, who becomes very man, in order to bear the burden of humanity. He takes measures to be able, He, the blessed God, to suffer and to die as a man ! Mystically, but really, it is he who sweats blood in Gethsemane ; he who is scourged in the Pretorium ; he who gives up his last breath on the cross. " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Once suppose God not to be in Jesus Christ personally, substantially, and the meaning of the cross escapes us, and edification perhaps gives place to offence. But a God who is love explains to me a God who dies, and God who dies is the only God in which humanity is able to believe. It rejects, it will never have any other.

We feel that this additional mystery, instead of oppressing, sets us free ; and would to God that it had the faith of our heart in the same degree as it has the adherence of our intellect ! But faith is the very substance of invisible things, and the belief of the understanding substantiates nothing ; what we only thus believe remains external to us ; it is by true

faith that external facts are made to us internal and consubstantial.

In Jesus Christ we both contemplate God in the plenitude of his attributes, and in the accomplishment of his will, and (marvellous to say) man as well, both as he is and as what he ought to be : God, I have said, in the plenitude of his attributes, for it hath pleased him that all the plenitude of divinity should dwell substantially in Christ, and for the first time he has revealed to the world the immensity of his love : man, I say, both as he is and as he ought to be ; the first being shown by the humiliation and suffering of Christ, which afford the measure of human guilt ; the latter being realized in the holiness of Christ, which, perfectly fulfilling the law in thought, word, and deed, rose far above the innocence of the first Adam. This is the object that the gospel offers to our contemplation ; but there is in this object a central point, a supreme moment, which condenses it, constitutes all its power over our soul, and makes the gaze that we fix thereon to be the principle and the aliment of a new moral life. This central point, this supreme moment, is the sacrifice.

Jesus, the victim, the sacrifice, was to accredit Jesus the teacher in the eyes of men, the sacrificing high priest was to introduce the prophet.

As to examples, the life of Jesus was full of them ; and we may here observe of that whole life that it was a passion, a prolonged death, of which the cross

was only the culmination and consecration ; but if the life of Jesus, even if closed by a natural and peaceful death, would still have appeared to us the most beautiful of lives, how its last scenes confer on it an added crown of glory !

All the virtues of Christ's holy life are there, but all sublimated to the highest degree, and converging as it were into a single focus, beneath a single glance.

What power was displayed by Jesus Christ, when bound to the cross, feeling his strength give way, and his life ooze drop by drop with his blood ! His feet were no longer able to carry him to meet sufferers, nor his hands to touch the eyes of the blind, nor his words to retain around him the astonished multitude, nor even his glance to stir the depths of consciences, and reveal man to himself. But on that cross, where he had abdicated all external power, he was more powerful than ever. Symbol and earnest this of the power of the Christian when reduced, as then his Master was, to internal activity only.

Do you want to look at the sufferings of the Son of man in themselves ? He did not, indeed, suffer all that a son of man may suffer, since hatred, envy, shame, and remorse, were strangers to his holy soul ; but he suffered what no son of man can suffer, at all events in the same degree, inasmuch as the spectacle of evil can never make on any one the same impression as on him, whose eyes were too pure to behold it ;

and no other ever has had, or ever can have, to endure such revolting injustice, since none has been or can be the object of such odious ingratitude. What then would you do to add to the sufferings of Jesus? Would you have him bear the sufferings of sin? That were impossible. Would you seek to intensify his woes by imagination? You cannot do this. There may have been physical tortures still more cruel, but—besides that we never could be sure after having indefinitely augmented these, that still more cruel tortures did not remain behind,—it is in the soul of Jesus that we must seek for the true passion of the God-man. And what human soul could ever have suffered what he did?

Jesus Christ did not come to earth merely to die. He taught, worked miracles, lived in the different relations of human life; and the gospel, in preserving for us other memories besides those of his death, has recommended to our study, as to our veneration, Jesus Christ as a whole. But he can only be made unto us righteousness, wisdom, and sanctification, because he has been made unto us redemption.

Retain all of Christ except his sacrifice, leave him all his holiness, his wisdom, and even (so far as this is possible subtracting that sacrifice) all his love, I still maintain that even in these other respects, the cross being suppressed, all fulness will not be found to have dwelt in him; nay, I say that he will have been made unto you neither wisdom, nor righteousness, nor sanctification, and that he

will leave you essentially and at bottom such as you are. I say that you cannot lay hold of all these things, cannot indeed discern and recognise them, except by the light of the cross, seeing that it is this light alone which makes legible the sacred characters in which all these truths have been engraved in Scripture. I go further; I say that this wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, the holy 'earnest of our inheritance' (Eph. i. 14; 2 Cor. v. 5), are contained in form and principle in our faith in the work of redemption; or, if you will, in the glance that we fix upon that work; I say that they proceed spontaneously from it, just as the blade of wheat puts forth the ear, and the ear the grain; that there is the beginning of wisdom, of sanctification, and of righteousness in the soul whose gaze is fixed upon the cross; I say that in proportion as it is so fixed, spiritual life, under the three forms these three words indicate, grows and develops itself silently in the heart of the Christian; I say that without such gaze there is no Christian, and that this very gaze of and by itself makes the Christian.

He who fails to regard this fact—Jesus Christ crucified—who neglects it in order to apply himself, as he supposes, to the essential and the principal, infallibly misses the aim to which he aspires. He hastens to the application, but the application of what, I ask? He attaches himself to the life; but where is the life if not in believing on Him whom the Father has sent? He will not pause, he per-

haps says, on a speculation true but idle, he will leave the mystery to devote himself to the light; the dogmatic, to cultivate the moral element. But would he then plant a tree without roots, or does he consent that his vine, watered with the purest blood in the world, should nevertheless produce only wild grapes? What! Can the incarnation be an indifferent fact? What! this fact being suppressed (and not to contemplate is virtually to suppress it) we should nevertheless have the same morality, evangelical morality; the same spirit, the spirit of sanctification? Rather is it evident that we should have in the gospel only a new and hardly amended edition of the ancient systems of morality. I say hardly amended, for although in certain respects it might seem more correct, in others it would appear obscure, exaggerated, impracticable. It would resemble a book all made up of mysterious allusions, for the understanding of which we should lack the key, which key is indeed no other than the cross.

We must not say, 'With many other truths there is this one truth in the Bible;' nor even, 'This truth is the most important in the gospel;' rather we must say, 'This truth is the gospel itself, and all the surplus gospel, if I may so speak, is either its expression or translation or application.' This truth is everywhere present in the gospel, as the blood is everywhere present in the human body. One who has understood this capital truth, sees and feels it even where another would not suspect its presence;

everything recalls, everything reproduces it; on whatever side he may look, to whatever detail he may descend, to whatever application he may extend his glance, he ever meets and recognises the cross.

It is not alone by the sufferings comprehended between Gethsemane and Calvary, nor by the passion, properly so called, that Jesus Christ saves us, but by all the sufferings of his life, which was throughout a passion; for he was delivered for our offences as soon as he opened his eyes to the full light of our sin, and long before he was exposed to the contradictions of sinners he bore his cross in bearing our sinful flesh. It is not even by the sufferings of all his life that he saves us, but by all his life. His work forms an indivisible whole; he could not have saved us without suffering or without dying, but he did not accomplish this salvation by his sufferings and death alone; he accomplished it by all that he was, by all that he effected; by his actions and by his words, by what he did and what he suffered, by his life as by his death. But, finally, his sufferings, and the painful death which was their end and crown, were the conditions without which he could not, according to the expression of a prophet, turn the heart of the Father to the children, and the heart of the children to the Father.

The King of heaven can only sign a glorious peace. When he deigns to pardon, this cannot be at the cost of his justice and holiness. The honour of his government may not suffer any infringement. A

prodigious dispensation, an immense sacrifice, proclaim to the furthest limits of creation that the eternal laws cannot be violated with impunity.

In the work of salvation, condemnation bursts forth in pardon, and pardon in condemnation. God could not save us without putting on our nature, becoming one of us, and summing up all our misery in himself. The cross, which is the triumph of grace, is the triumph of the law as well.

Yes, "love is a mystery, the greatest of all mysteries, and the key to all mysteries, having itself no key. In the least impulse of a true love there is more than can be fathomed by the most penetrating intellect. Love, like life, eludes all explanation; love is its own reason; it is from the beginning with God; it is God; nothing has preceded it nor begotten it. To ask it to give account of itself is vain, impossible; as well might it be said to God, Who made thee?" Excellent doctrine! But was this reply of M. Martin's exactly the right one? That the work of Christ is one of *devotedness* no one doubts, but it is no less a *chastisement*. Christ endures it voluntarily, but he does endure it; and it is in the most literal sense that the orator whose words we have quoted takes the scriptural declaration: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." Instead of denying the chastisement, it would have been better to say: There was chastisement or penalty; offended Justice satisfied itself in Calvary, and before that in the incarnation; but the victim offered itself, and its

sacrifice was efficacious only because it was thus offered ; a passive victim, whatever its nature, would have been in vain. The chastisement would have accomplished nothing without the self-devotion. M. Martin's answer hits the mark in so far as it introduces the idea of this self-devotion, which excludes that of injustice ; but this very answer shakes in our opinion the system of the whole book, which rests upon the assumption of chastisement endured as such. One might even inquire whether the objection that M. Martin raises is the true one or not. The voluntary character of the sufferings of Christ easily removes all suspicion of injustice, because it is certain that if Christ had not himself demanded to suffer, God would not have demanded it of him, God would not have imposed the penalty of the law upon any innocent being. But what one has to inquire is, how the suffering of the innocent can justify the guilty ? Now, M. Martin does not put this question, which is however a very natural one.

It may be answered negatively. We may say that this saving transaction is neither more nor less inconceivable than devotedness and love in general. We may defy the human mind to devise any other plan of pardon and salvation which is not unworthy of God, nay, unworthy of man, and consequently inefficacious and illusory. We may connect this mystery with a more general mystery which we all accept, because facts constrain us thereto,—the mystery of solidarity. Sin is transmissible, rever-

sible ; why should not righteousness, under certain conditions, be so too ? All this may perhaps explain nothing, but it is not without force for all that. In many speculative difficulties we have to content ourselves with less.

Humanity, which from all time had nursed within itself an ideal of pure love, was still awaiting its realization, and awaits it no longer since the day of the crucifixion.

If from the point of view of the God-man's cross, a vulgar morality be absurd, this cross of the God-man is equally absurd from the point of view of a vulgar morality. What need have we of Christ, and how should not his cross be a superfluous thing, as soon as it is understood that we are not called to perfection ? Jesus Christ is then grown less ! By how much ? I know not ; but what you have to learn is, that if Christ be no longer necessary to you, he is no longer even useful.

Jesus Christ, as the Saviour, enters at once into the soul and fills it completely ; Jesus Christ as love, the true new man, grows therein slowly and laboriously.

The sign of his doctrine being true was his crucifixion, for it is only the excess of sin, or the perfection of virtue, that could have been hated thus.

CHAPTER III.

APPROPRIATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

I.—CONTEMPLATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE truths by which we live are the truths we see. In this order of ideas, to believe is to see ; to see is to live. Every truth that you have not seen is external to you, is not your own.

It is with the heights of the spirit as with the glories of the firmament. When on a clear night myriads of constellations sparkle on the brow of heaven, this dazzling wealth of the starry vault enchants whoever has eyes to see it ; but he to whom Providence has refused the gift of sight would in vain have a mind open to the highest conceptions, in vain would his intellectual capacity surpass by far that of average men ; all his intelligence, with all the added strength that study might have bestowed on his rare natural faculties, could in no wise help him to form an idea of the enchanting spectacle ; while, standing by his side, some man without talent and without culture would only need to open his eyes to embrace at a glance, and in some

sense to appropriate, the splendour of the firmament, and to receive into his soul, through the medium of his eyes, the impression that such a sight cannot fail to produce. In the gospel, another heaven, more magnificent than the azure vault above our heads, displays itself to our gaze. Divine truths are the stars of that mystical sky, and shine there brighter and purer than the stars of the firmament; but an eye is needed to see them, and that eye is love. The gospel is a work of love; Christianity is only love realized under its purest form; and just as material light can only be known through the eye, so love can only be understood by love.

Knowledge can give us convictions, love alone can give us life.

He who contemplates the Son, and who believes in him, he it is who has eternal life. There must be an object of contemplation, God alone can be this object; but the necessity of contemplating is laid upon man. The object proposed to our view is of such a nature, and has such virtue, that when looked at, it restores our life, just as the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses restored to life those who raised their eyes to it.

We do not in the present instance mean by the expression *looking*, the examination of the evidence which establishes the truth of Christianity, although the testimony in its favour has been confirmed by prodigies, miracles, and many other efforts of divine power (Heb. ii. 4); neither do we mean the study of

the Scriptures, though the language of the prophets very decidedly points to Jesus. All these means are indeed desirable, nay, necessary ; and we would on no account dissuade you from a study too much neglected in our days, and without which it is to be feared that many will never come to contemplate Jesus Christ ; but after all, these labours all combined are not equal in value, and never can replace the look that we insist upon, and that look alone has very often been a substitute for them all.

“Faith,” no doubt, “comes from hearing ;” that is to say, it is hearing that is the origin of faith—its first starting-point ; but it is the look that must perfect the incomplete work of the ear. How stands the man, think you, who has heard much, read much, and who has not looked ?—the man who has carefully informed himself of the proofs of Christ’s divinity, has received them, and yet has not looked at Christ,—the man whom these proofs have convinced, that is to say, conquered, forced to believe ; but whose faith, perfectly passive, submits to truth without embracing it, without uniting himself with it by any movement on his own part, and for whom, singular fact, truth at the same time *is* and *is not*,—the man who, led by his studies to the very foot of the cross, remains there with eyes cast down, instead of raised to the One whom that cross bears, and whose adorable blood is flowing down the accursed tree ? Others have not been able to believe till they have looked up and seen Jesus Christ : they have believed,

I allow, but with a forced belief, on the general, rather than on their own personal account ; with a belief which was for them only a yoke and a burden, a faith that they supported, instead of its supporting them, till at length, passing on beyond a labour terminated and a source exhausted, they set themselves simply to look at Jesus.

The uses of the cross are not equally known to all ; nay, not one of us avails himself of them as he might, because no one sufficiently remembers that the cross applies to everything, suffices for everything, includes everything ; that it is all in all ; that it gives us everything on earth, and promises everything in heaven.

All the power, all the reality of Christianity in each Christian, is here, and here only. Even the example and the teaching of Jesus Christ himself wait for a ray from the cross to vivify and fertilize them. Till then their range is debateable, their sense uncertain ; they only signify what we choose to make them signify ; they have only a positive, precise, and absolute value from the moment that this ray—shall I say this luminous glance of Christ crucified?—brings out into full relief all their features and extent. Above all, it is only then that the soul becomes resolute to observe those lessons, and to follow that example, and that, burning its ships, as it were, it precludes itself, while landing on its conquered territory, any means of returning to the country it has quitted. Determination, energy, are

here only, because it is only here, and not from any teaching or from any example, that joy and love flow forth freely and perpetually.

From this height we see all that can be seen, we know all that can be known; the view that we enjoy from this loftiest point combines and includes all. If we want to know what man is, how can we learn it better than from the inexpressible horror of this death where the excess of suffering is aggravated by the excess of ignominy, where ingratitude and treachery express all their bitterness into the cup of suffering, where glory and pity are alike absent, and from whence God himself turns away his face and withdraws his consolations? If it is because of man that a perfectly holy being thus suffers, what must man be? How desperate his disease, and at the same time how great his primitive excellence and dignity! What, in fact, must not that being be in the Divine idea for whom God himself consented to die? Look then, and say, There is man!

Or if you would know man no longer as he is, but as he may and ought to be, what will teach you this so well as the cross,—where a righteous man (but still a man, remember) dies for the unrighteous, where a human soul displays all that man has ever conceived, and never realized, of abnegation, magnanimity, gentleness, moral power,—as this death, which, compared to all the most glorious deaths recorded by history, leaves their glories, even those it itself

inspired, far behind? Look then again and repeat, Here is man! Is this all? No; it is God himself that you need to see and to know. The sight of the cross has humbled you, I allow; it has exalted your moral sense, and restored to you the feeling of your original destiny and your reasonable service. This too I allow. But these corner-stones would remain corner-stones eternally; they would never support any structure if God remained for you that unknown God towards whom your love and reverence only go out hesitatingly, and die before they have reached him. But in the death of his Son, he unveils to you an image full of majesty and mercy, he shows himself as a living God in whose hands it is no longer fearful, but sweet to fall; as a father, in short, who has ever been a father, but now declares it to you. In the same way he has ever been holy; but did you ever know this, did you ever form to yourself an idea of the holiness of God, till the moment when, to draw men from sin, God suffered his own holy Son to suffer such contradictions and indignities from sinful men? Did you ever understand till then how suffering and sin were narrowly united, inseparable, and, in a word, but one? Now a look, one single look, tells you all this; teaches you all you had to learn; removes from you all fear; restores to you at once a master and a father; assures you of a friend and intercessor in heaven; dispels from your mind the darkness of death; gives the solution to the enigma of life, and makes you cast

the anchor of a joyous hope beyond the veil of death.

In proportion as our gaze upon Jesus becomes prolonged, it excites a holy enthusiasm, a holy love within us; it renders these dispositions habitual and dominant; it becomes the light as well as the warmth of our life; it facilitates, simplifies, irradiates everything; it does more than refute doubts, it absorbs them; it quenches in its brightness all false or equivocal glimmers; it puts aside frivolous questions; casts off subtleties as refuse; creates a triumphant evidence; and transporting us beforehand into the light of heaven, it places below our feet the clouds that once hovered above our heads.

All the treasures of wisdom are comprised in this light of the cross. It does not give us trust in God without giving us distrust of ourselves; nay, it makes this very distrust a portion of our faith, an element of our strength, an earnest of our safety. It inspires us, in short, with humility and courage both; by concentrating on one object our hopes and our gaze, and continually reminding us, by the mouth of the prophet, to "look at the rock whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged."

This one word, this one object, the cross, may suffice to make Christians, and without it nothing else suffices. The proper subject of apostleship, of the missionary as of the pastor, is to announce Jesus Christ; this is his first lesson; and it is the

strength, the grace, the meaning, the key of all the others. O marvel far beyond our conceptions! A look, a simple look (I say not an argument, a study, a toil), a simple look converts the world, and the essential work of the minister is to induce sinners, these dying multitudes of another desert,—to raise their weary heads from the ground, and to turn their eyes in the direction pointed out.

All the complications and difficulties of Christian life melt away of themselves in this blessed unity of the Christian's look to Jesus! This look, in all that simplicity which makes a child capable of it, suffices for everything; it is the instrument of the most varying effects, the remedy for the most opposite diseases. It is equally victorious over the perplexities of systems and the anguish of doubt, the attacks of pride and of despair, the temptations of pleasure and of grief, the bitterness of hatred, and the weakness of natural affections. When we contemplate the cross, a light issues therefrom which swallows up all darkness—a flash of love which consumes all dislikes. All arguments, combinations, counsels, methods, are not equal for the heart, or even for the mind, to one look directed to Jesus, and even where other means prove useful, (and who would deny that they may do so?) this look, this light, are still necessary to quicken and confirm them all.

We defend the sacred cause of the contemplation of Jesus, without, however, condemning subjective

observation, for that would be to condemn the gospel which authorizes and recommends it.

II.—REPENTANCE.

Repentance is literally the returning of the soul to itself, in order to punish itself for a fault committed; it is a penalty, a chastisement, that it internally inflicts upon itself; it is the natural rebound, the reaction from sin, in a conscience that retains the feeling of its duties and its destination.

It is a great relief to the soul to be freed from the opinion of its own merit. It gains great power from having no dependence on its power, and yet being able to promise itself the victory.

The noblest, and when once he comes to feel it distinctly, the deepest and most imperious of the wants of man, is that of satisfying the moral law, that law which is God himself manifested to the conscience, that law which, on the other hand, is only absolute for the soul in so much as it finds God therein. We may indeed affirm that the satisfaction of this law is the want of all, and that this want has its own time and place in every life whatever; but even were it confined to a choice section of the human race, that section would be constrained to demand its satisfaction. Now this satisfaction is refused to man upon earth; he neither sees it consummated in himself or around him; and it would be in vain that he should seek to persuade himself

that a universal disorder might pass for order, and that, perhaps, from a point of view high above the reach of human vision, this disorder might become order. Such answers would appear to him mere irony; would but perplex him into irritation. The obstacle remains intact, and life wears itself away against a problem which is never removed.

And because the sentiment of moral obligation carries with it that of responsibility, because the sense of having infringed the law, or even of not having accomplished it, hollows out in the soul an abyss that we may indeed disguise, but never fill; another want arises within us, the want of a reparation of some kind. I say designedly *reparation*, I do not say *pardon*; conscience cannot ask from another a pardon it refuses to itself; and even were the pardon of the legislator announced—I mean a pure and simple pardon—conscience would not believe in it, rest on it, nor ratify it. Necessarily implacable towards itself, it would continue internally to avenge the law which renounced its own vengeance. It can only be satisfied when reconciled with itself; it cannot satisfy itself at the expense of the law; all that wounds the law attacks conscience itself, for conscience is the law individualized; and hence exists the indispensable necessity that all rehabilitation offered to it should include reparation for the disorder of which it feels itself at once the accomplice and the victim.

Victim! doubtless conscience is this; but it is

because it is not sufficiently so, because it is inadequate to the sacrifice, because all the reparation it can offer or accomplish exhausts its strength without exhausting its guilt,—it is for this reason that its torment increases. And as this torment increases in proportion as the soul becomes higher; as it is keenest in the most innocent lives, we cannot help seeing in this avowal of the best natures an implicit confession of the whole human race panting beneath the burden of its own reprobation. And yet what would be the use to us of a reparation purely *vindictive*? Let us suppose that it might be paid with another price than our own selves, and that the means of our absolution did not deprive us of the means of profiting from it; that we ourselves were not to be the holocaust of our sin; of what avail were it, that by some means or other in us, or outside of us, reparation should be made, if this reparation were purely negative, effacing the evil but not creating the good, if it did not re-establish within us the law that it avenged outside of us, if it failed to bind our life to that law by our own heart's consent, if it did not cause to triumph in us obedience in liberty, and liberty in obedience, beneath the auspices and the mediation of love?

The solution of these questions includes that of all others; the satisfaction of these wants assures that of all wants besides; while other questions solved, other needs supplied leave a great void in the soul, and so long as it has not learned and

received what we have just been laying down, it seems as though it had received nothing, learned nothing.

True religion, in its origin, can only be a blessed encounter between pardon and repentance. It is to other hours, brighter hours, that belongs the free and full impulse of an emotion which the memories of sin and the consciousness of God's justice crush back austere in a heart where pardon has as yet been neither appropriated nor enjoyed. The dawn of the blessed day is a severe, cold, and even stormy dawn. In some fear, in others shame, confusion, bitterness of remorse—in all, a feeling very different from free and joyous love—constitute the crisis, the decisive moment of the moral cure. And because conscience is the culminating point, as well as the most fertilizing principle of the moral being, therefore it is given, to it alone, to circumscribe and surround the whole man. Through a humbled conscience you will infallibly reach the heart, and easily the intelligence and the imagination; whereas by none of these faculties will you certainly get at the conscience. It would be useless, after so many experiences, to demonstrate that our natural sensibility, however exalted it be, does not resolve itself into obedience till our soul has been convinced of its state of sin and condemnation. And as for the thoughts of reason and imagination, how many years, how many ages, they may exercise our intellect, threading all its intricacies without ever by

their own force attaining to the delicate, irritable bleeding point where groans the sovereign of the moral being, the interpreter and organ of the thrice holy God ! The history of the human mind sufficiently tells us this. Never has philosophy given birth to a religion ; and as for poetry, even allowing her to have done more than embellish already existing creeds, what has she ever produced under the name of religion but poetry still ?—whereas, conscience once awakened, wakens the whole man ; conscience cured, cures the whole man ; its peace is shed abroad in the heart ; the heart delivered from its troubles, set free from its chains, springs freely forward to its first, its true object ; reason rises to a point of view whence everything appears to it harmonious and coherent ; imagination replaces vain dreams by magnificent hopes,—hopes certain as though they were not immense, immense as though not certain,—and by the most marvellous alliance between the real and the ideal. I do not mean to say that the lever of conscience moves this universe in every man alike ; in many its development remains incomplete, limited by ill-founded fears, by imperious traditions, or precedent ; but at least the heart is gained over to love, and is not love the accomplishment of the human destiny ? Is not love the whole of life ?

The law may be satisfied in two ways : by its fulfilment when this takes place ; and by the suffering of the responsible agent when the fulfilment has

been refused. Thus conscience wills it to be, and wills it so strongly, that it continues to will it even in the bosom of a religion which apparently subjugates it, by pointing out some other source of satisfaction, such as repentance, works of supererogation, etc. etc.

Inefficacious repentances often repeated, end by wearing out the soul ; but this is not only because they leave it as they found it ; in departing they deposit in it a poisoned seed. This is the usual revenge of all ill-treated truth. The impatience of failure, the shame of defeat, quicken the ever present germs of irritation and revolt. We are first of all angry with ourselves, then secretly angry with the truth. We hate ourselves for the bad reception given to her ; we hate her for the very injury we have done her. Truth ceases to appear attractive when our own faults have armed her with a grievance against us ; and when, from being our friend and guide, she has necessarily become our adversary. The same ever in herself, she is no longer the same relatively to us. From respect and love we gradually fall, through our own wrong-doing, to repugnance and hatred. There is no medium ; the breath that has not been able to extinguish, only spreads the flame.

Whatever may be the defects of a natural repentance ; whatever the results of a repentance often deceived, they cannot be compared to the state of a soul which brutally, and of deliberate purpose, chooses the joys of sin and the consolations of im-

penitence, and forbids to conscience even a remonstrance or a lamentation. Happy in comparison with such is he who repents, were it even with a weak and transitory repentance.

Owing to the coarseness of our moral perceptions, this repentance which has a certain semblance of inconstancy is generally discredited. To disavow nothing, never to retrace our steps, this in our day forms part of the ideal of strength. We are no longer capable of discerning that it is in repentance that strength really lies. Every one chooses his life to resemble a printed book, where none of the corrections of the manuscript appear; piques himself upon a life without erasures; would not even have a trace of hesitation suspected, or of internal combats preceding all-important resolutions. It is not our fault if we be not supposed suddenly enlightened, infallibly inspired upon all subjects whatever; and the old adage which gives out that error is the attribute of humanity, exists for the world in general, and no longer for any one in particular.

III.—NEW BIRTH—CONVERSION—SANCTIFICATION.

To be in the truth is to become, by our affections and conduct, ever more and more like Jesus Christ; it is to follow him spiritually in all the events he has gone through: in his death, by our death to sin; in his resurrection, by our regeneration; in his invisible glory, by our life hid with him

in God ; in a word, we must spiritually live over again the whole life of Jesus Christ, and this alone can be called knowing the truth and walking in the truth.

The adoption of Christianity is at the same time a natural thing, since it is conscience immediately which acknowledges and accepts the truth ; and a supernatural, since it is God who enables us to descend to the depths of our own conscience, and to lend ear to its most secret voice.

There are two generations, that of nature and that of grace ; there are two men, the natural and the spiritual ; the generation of the first is accomplished by the will of the flesh, the latter by the intervention of the Spirit ; the natural man is of the flesh, the renewed of the Spirit. St. Paul, as well as Jesus Christ, sees in the one only flesh, and names him accordingly ; in the other, he beholds the Spirit added to the flesh,—a second birth which is spiritual grafted upon the first which is carnal ; and he describes this last man after the Spirit, although the Spirit manifests itself in the flesh. We must not then be surprised that by him, and elsewhere too, the natural man should often be called carnal ; *carnal* is synonymous with *natural*, which epithet would surprise no one, and the two words might be used indifferently. It is in the same sense that St. Paul gives to the natural man the appellation of psychical (vulgarly *animal*, or rather *animated*), that is to say, provided with a soul, but not as yet

re-integrated by the Spirit of grace into his ancient prerogatives. It is no doubt remarkable, that with St. Paul *psychical* and *carnal* describe the same state, signify the same thing. This is because each expression may be indifferently employed to describe humanity, reduced to the condition into which sin has brought it. Nevertheless one of these denominations is generally preferred to the other, and St. Paul, starting from the idea that I have described, seems sometimes to attribute to the flesh what specially belongs to the soul, because the idea of the flesh, in his mind, involves the idea of the natural soul. It is thus when, reproving the Corinthians for their divisions and party spirit, he reproaches them with being *carnal*, although the passions of pride and fanaticism are not, properly speaking, *carnal* passions.

Everything is mysterious, nothing is magical, in the process of conversion; the laws of our nature are observed therein, and we do not for a moment cease to be men.

God could with a single word create new heavens even within the limits of the old; but the secret and obscure birth into the true life of a single human soul is a more important event than the creation of a new universe in the deserts of space—if space have deserts.

God might with one breath of his mouth sweep bare the firmament, annihilate those planets and those suns amongst which the globe on which the

human race agitates itself is but a grain of sand on the shore of the ocean, or a drop of water in that ocean; but this fearful catastrophe would be but a vulgar accident compared with the final destruction of one of those souls that God has made capable of contemplating, understanding, and adoring him.

The distinct offer of free salvation is in the life of every man a great crisis, which terminates differently according to the different disposition in us with which it meets. Should it find us chastened, condemned of our own conscience, the word *grace* that it sounds in our ears is received with hope into our soul, which it reassures and consoles. If we are tranquilly resting on the sentiment of our own righteousness, it takes away that support to replace it by itself; in order to enrich, it despoils; in order to exalt, it abases us; and begins by making of the just men of yesterday the sinners of to-morrow.

Free—I mean free with that evil freedom which is only bondage,—it offers us a benefit, the acceptance of which for ever compromises our liberty, by placing us under such obligation to God that we no more belong to ourselves; with a holy violence it forces us to return toward his law by the way of his mercy; it snatches us from the world to give us to him. In a word, it deals the most formidable blows to our pride and our selfishness.

The whole gospel is comprised in the second birth, and it is by this very idea that it terrifies and repels. It is this which people would fain subtract from it;

everything connected with it gets accepted except regeneration, that is to say, except the essential, except the whole. Shall we then accuse the gospel of having closed to itself the road to human hearts? But this would be to accuse it of having designed to save us; for there is no salvation except in the truth of which we are so afraid; and reason itself declares that we could be saved by no other means, for how separate salvation from regeneration?

Rome might more easily be built than a man converted in a single day. Such a prodigy is possible with God; but in a thousand, in ten thousand cases to one, we may safely predict that he will not perform it.

This union of the soul with truth, although perpetual and uninterrupted, will always have the charm of an ever fresh encounter, freed from the difficulties of ignorance and the torments of doubt; the mind will still enjoy the delight of learning and discovering, but the glorious privilege of this new state is that man, transplanted into his new country, seeing God at length such as he is, will become more and more like him, will feel his heart dilate with all that abounds in the heart of God, will see his inner nature becoming gradually just, loving, and holy, and will for ever rejoice in subserving the adorable designs of his Father, even as God, blessed for ever, himself rejoices, divinely and ineffably, in conceiving and accomplishing them.

One must have formed a very feeble and very

false idea of the conversion of the heart, if one supposes that the fairest examples and most solemn lessons ever brought about conversion in any case whatever.

Conversion supposes so complete and so earnest an abjuration of all the principles of the natural man, I say not only of his vices, but of his virtues ; it so implies a general sacrifice, without reservation and without regret, expecting from God no other indemnity, except God himself ; that it would be absolutely irrational to attribute to example and precept, however excellent these may be, powers to produce in us a revolution so thorough and so fundamental.

The work of God in the conversion of souls is evidently constructed upon a plan ; this plan itself must have been based upon the actual dispositions of human nature ; the adaptation of the souls to the plan, and of the plan to the psychological and natural data, constitutes, no doubt, a true system ; consequently conversion and salvation operate according to a system, and observations, a thousand times repeated, have brought out in the history of this greatest of moral events (I mean conversion) a general order that theologians have called the order of divine grace, and which they have attempted to retrace. But many causes, which may easily be imagined without my indicating them, have tended, in the mind of theologians, increasingly to contract the immense circle in which the divine mercy of the Father of spirits moves freely and by countless circumvolu-

tions. The progress of conversion has been written once for all, its history invariably traced,—all souls being summoned, so to speak, to set out from the same point and arrive by the same road ; the sequence of the impressions of a soul drawn towards God have been minutely described ; in short, no physician would venture to foretell with equal confidence the successive phases of a recovery from the most normal case of the most familiar malady. That the infinite diversity of God's wisdom, and that variety of counsels and means which all resolve themselves into love, should disappear beneath the vague and dull uniformity of these descriptions, is of itself a very grave disadvantage, but it is not the only one, nor the greatest. I see a greater still in the illusion of many who, instead of simply obeying the attraction of grace, instead of feeling what they really do feel, and (if I may be permitted the expression), letting themselves alone, concoct, so to speak, a plan which is not and cannot be theirs, reproduce from an official catalogue a certain series of moral movements and conditions, go regularly through the whole list, and after having done and felt everything according to rule, and under the auspices of a director, find out at length (bitter but necessary disappointment) that they have only pursued an illusory path, and walked in a dream. This is, I allow, a paternal, though a painful lesson, but does it not point out our precipitation and overfondness for system ? And does it not warn us that, while ever presenting to sinners, with

all integrity, the scheme of the divine love in its true form, and under its true conditions, we must beware of particularizing too much, and wanting to classify everything ; that we must leave to each soul its own way, which is indeed rather God's way ; must respect individualities and circumstances of all kinds, as original premises that God has laid down beforehand,—write down the history of facts only when these facts have come to pass, and never the history of two facts alike ; and, finally, rejoice while we compare these histories, to observe, amidst their infinite and brilliant variety, a majestic unity appear, the unity of broad features, not of form or incident.

Pardon, which is the special object and very substance of redemption, is not effective, is not realized without sanctification. Pardon only takes its effect when it is written in our heart, when the Spirit of God witnesses to our spirit that we are God's children ; when faith has united us in holiness to the heavenly Father. Until then, the intention of pardon is complete, no doubt ; the price has been paid, its rights have been acquired ; but if this pardon do not touch, do not change us, it will have been granted to us in vain, and our banishment or our relegation will still last.

We cannot too often repeat it : conversion is only sanctification begun, and sanctification is only conversion continued.

SECOND SECTION.

DOCTRINE AND MORALITY OF CHRISTIANITY.



CHAPTER I.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANITY.

I.—HUMANITY OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. *Its Relations to Religion in general ; Christianity and Natural Religion ; and Religions of Human Invention.*

RELIGION in its earliest developments is a sublime *petitio principii*.

No man can bestow a religion upon humanity. If we speak of natural religion, it is given by nature, and all that a man can do is to systematize its dogmas, and republish its moral lessons ; in which case he only restores to humanity what he originally received from it. If we speak of a positive religion —by which I mean one whose doctrines unaided human reason could not have discovered,—I ask what range of feeling, reason, imagination, what extent of genius, what marvellous divination must we not ascribe to one given man to suppose that these dogmas of his individual invention, dogmas not

taught by nature, shall find admittance in every land ; prove suitable to all times, applicable to all conditions of humanity and society ; in a word, shall be adequate to constitute, and shall in point of fact constitute, the religion of the human race ?

If religion be not for all the world, it is for no one ; if less necessary to these than those, it is useless to all.

A religion is not an idea, a philosophical theory that belongs to no one in particular, and that each may modify at his will ; it is a faith, true or false, but one and indivisible in its falsehood as in its truth.

A religion is neither a law nor a doctrine ; it is a fact that unites the heart and will of man to the Author of his being. The manner in which we acquire the accent of a language is a striking illustration of what we call synthesis. Religion is learnt in the same way. It is characteristic of true religion, as of all true systems, that each truth contains the whole truth, and each detail, rigidly followed up, entails the whole system.

Religion is to a great many a book written in a foreign tongue. If they condescended to open this admirable book, that is to say, if they examined for themselves, and in itself, the religion proposed to their attention, they would soon say that the language of the mysterious volume was human, universal, intelligible to all ; a language, at least, that the whole world might learn if it would. But instead

of testing this, they have recourse to translations. These translations, of which the best are imperfect, the most faithful far from giving the whole force of the original, are Christians themselves, are all those who profess Christianity. Nay, men do not even take the trouble to choose between these different versions, or if they do choose, you know how. At all events, if they chance to have met with one which is obscure, palpably incorrect, full of glaring contradictions, directly perverting the text, still they are satisfied with it, take it for granted that they know the original, and judge of it without further appeals from this most faithless version.

We have said elsewhere that a religion is not a language but a life; or if you prefer it, it is only a distinct and intelligible language, in so much as it is a life. It is a life added to life, the life of our life itself, which it pervades as thoroughly as the blood does the flesh that it nourishes. And just as wherever in the body a superficial incision be made, it causes the blood to flow; so religion, that true and pure blood of human life, gushes from all parts of that life at the least touch, the slightest contact of external objects; by which we mean, that—occupying the very centre of our thought and will, being for the one the standard, and for the other the rule of everything whatever—it cannot be absent from a single movement of our life, but must take part in, and preside over, each of our motives.

Religion is not so much an idiom that we must

learn to speak fluently, as a life that we have to appropriate in action; and our souls should offer rather a sphere than an echo to divine truth.

It is with the genius of a religion as with that of a language. The genius of a language does not reside in certain idiomatic peculiarities, which are mere accidents, but in its grammatical constructions in which is engraved the indelible image of the nation that employs it, and which always remains identical with itself. It little matters that there should be a fluctuating portion around the great permanent basis; the foundation will still endure; the sails of the vessel are invariably attached to the masts, although they flutter with every breeze. So is it with the genius of a religion, especially with that of a true religion.

To reduce religion to nothing more than a restraint is to degrade it. It should do far more than prevent and check; it should impel, animate, create. Fear is but the *beginning* of wisdom.

If there be found in the world a positive religion adapted to the guidance of life, and favourable to the progress of the human mind, which meets with no limits in any circumstance of time and place, that religion is of God.

Religion is not exclusively, but it is primarily, obedience.

To obey—not ourself, not a self-imposed law, not an idea, but a person, a personal God—there is the essence of religion. There is no substitute for this.

Every religion contains the germ of a society; and this society is the more intimate, the more spiritual the principle of the religion.

Religion may become a passion like another, and a passion most certainly with which we must not trifle. And if it do not become a passion, it is as difficult, nay, more difficult, to subdue it calm than excited.

One who contemplated religion under the earthly forms that it has assumed, might say with an appearance of reason that it is one of the greatest scourges that nature has inflicted upon humanity.

The more complete the dependence to which religion submits the individual, the higher as to all other relations the independence it confers. All religion is liberty; by giving us to one master, it frees us from the rest. If it do not abolish obligations of other kinds, it renders them at least relative instead of absolute. We still belong to society, nay, we even belong to it more, but we do so through the medium of a higher obligation, for man can never have two masters. It is this independence which offends the mighty of the earth, and, generally speaking, all those who do not possess it.

Everything for the Spirit, everything by the Spirit: this is the motto of every religion that has faith in itself.

After all, religion can do whatever it will; and no power in the world has ever effected such great things.

We learn in the schools to proceed from the

known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex. But there is much in the order of God's kingdom that deranges all our previous ideas. Here it is just by the unknown, the complex, the extraordinary that we must begin. It is by revealed religion that man ascends to natural religion.

Some one was once speaking of Buffon's *Natural History* in presence of Voltaire, who exclaimed, "Not so *natural* after all." And so I say of natural religion, and even, if you will, of natural morality. Christianity, we hear it said, has given rise to some additional sentiments in our heart, and additional ideas in our reason; rather say that Christianity has given us a new heart and new reason; it has at least opened the one and the other, and given a free passage towards the light to plants whose frozen germ only waited a ray from that sun of righteousness. That of which humanity did not even suspect the existence, appeared natural so soon as known, and it was natural in fact, for it corresponded to all facts and completed all truths.

Revealed religion rather leads to natural, than natural religion to revealed. This is not a paradoxical assertion. In point of fact, so-called natural religion only becomes real, only deserves its name, when it has received the seal of revelation. For, strictly speaking, there is and can be no *natural religion*. Revelation gives a certainty, a new sense, to truths that were presupposed, but not yet living, and not yet applied to the conscience.

The very fact of Christianity being preached, involves the preaching of natural religion, and it is in no way necessary to have a series of separate discourses on that subject. Even in the pulpit it is much better to treat the truths contained in religion as internal moral facts than objective truths.

Natural religion, as soon as it makes itself positive, is no longer capable of being the religion of the human race.

The immortality of the soul, or the perpetuity of the individual human being, is the common bond of all religions ; it is their most elementary, but, at the same time, not their most intimate fact. Nothing more necessary in any religion, we do not go so far as to say, nothing more profound. In other words, there is no religion without this belief, but the belief is not religion. Religion is pre-eminently the need, and next, the sentiment of God ; it is the creature's relation of subordination and love to the Creator ; conceived, desired, sought, found, this relation is the primary idea and the essential truth of all religious life. Such a relation, in its purity, is too spiritual to be as common in the thoughts and the speech of man as the hope of a second life, a hope which is, as it were, the bone in which this marrow is enclosed.

This sentiment, this need, is the most Christian element that could possibly exist in the world, external to and previous to the appearance of Christianity ; it is consequently that which Christianity recognises

as its own, as homogeneous with itself in all times, all countries, all souls ; it is that which, amidst the religious manifestations of different ages and different religions, it eagerly adopts and takes under its protection ; these aspirations towards truth are, in its eyes, a part of truth.

Nothing disarms conscience so much as the negation of a great future. When the idea of a future judgment is put aside ; when we have ceased vividly to picture to ourselves an economy in which man, separated from all that in this world separated him from conscience, shall be given over without defence, cessation, or diversion to the terrible vengeance of this insulted judge ; when we no longer behold with the eye of faith that profound and eternal solitude where remorse insatiable, indefatigable, shall be the only society, the only thought of the unbelieving soul, where the sinner will endure the greatest of all torments, that of being eternally alone with his own self ;—then conscience may be slighted with impunity, and man, without expressly denying it, comes only to admit its least severe requirements, those most adapted to his weakness or his pride, and if he still continue to speak of principles or duties, these are only the principles that he has framed for himself, and the duties that he has chosen.

The instinct of religion is not extinct in human nature. Man needs to adore. Faith in the infinite is the law of his being ; he seeks the infinite everywhere, and rather than dispense with it, imagines it

where it does not exist. Thought, science, love, country, humanity, gratuitously invested with this attribute, become for him deities. He believes himself able to expend himself boundlessly, to devote himself exclusively, now to the one, now to the other,—each in its turn becomes for him an abyss into which he flings his life. But the bottom of this abyss, which he had supposed fathomless, is soon reached.

All these various worships are not religions ; they are *admiration*s, which, carried to their fullest extent, assume the name of adorations. Religion is an obedience. Religion having God for its object, prostrates the created being before him, annihilates the sinful man. All other religions elevate man, the true religion humbles and lowers him. This is, no doubt, to raise him, but in the quality of penitent and servant. These two titles constitute all his glory. To descend in order to rise : these words comprise everything.

To sum up, human religions are literally the apotheosis of the will.

In spite of all contrary efforts and all pretensions, each one has his religion, never doubt it ; each has his worship, each deifies something, and if he has no ideal to pay homage to, he deifies self.

Under cover of Christianity, and in the very midst of it, vegetate certain religions, without history, form, or name, which to many persons hold the place of Christianity. These religions, which are

more indebted to Christianity than they suppose, are nothing more than an attempt of different faculties of the human soul to place themselves, by their own efforts, in communication with the Deity. They are imagination, feeling, reason, or conscience, seeking, either singly or united, to satisfy their need of God. And it is to be observed that these religions belong more particularly to those cultivated minds who would fain find a neutral ground between Christianity, which seems to them too simple and too little rational, and Atheism, which appals them.

The religion of conscience! Is it not that which enjoins our living for God, doing nothing but for him, devoting ourselves, body and soul, entirely to him? Is it not that which teaches us that to withhold anything from him, is to defraud him, because everything within us and without us appertains to him by sovereign right? Is it not that which teaches us that we cannot do too much for him, and that consequently all the efforts of our future cannot compensate for one of the omissions of our past? Is it not that which condemns our life absolutely, irrevocably, and which presents us before God, not as children, not even as suppliants, but as criminals and victims? Will you now maintain the religion of conscience to be benign? Yes, for loose, self-indulgent consciences, without delicacy or purity; but the more attached you are to your duties, the more exact in fulfilling them, the more severe and complete your ideas of the divine law, the more terrible will this religion be

to you, and, far from proffering you any consolation, it will deprive you, one by one, of all those you seek to draw from your own resources.

The threefold object of all religions—to enlighten, to console, and to renew—has never been reached by any one of these partial religions, nor by all combined. Look at the religion of imagination. It is the charm of a few fugitive moments; it is neither the light, the support, nor the sanctification of the soul. Shall we try the religion of thought? Its only reasonable pretension, which is to enlighten, is so ill supported, that it does little else than deepen our darkness on religious questions. Shall we apply to the religion of feeling? It stirs the surface of the soul; it does not reach its depths, does not renew. Finally, the best of all these religions, that of conscience, has by its very excellence proved to us the impotence of man to provide himself with a religion. It has shown us the abyss that sin has hollowed out between us and God, it has not availed to fill it up.

2. *Universality of Christianity.*

We must not misapprehend the gospel statements regarding man's natural opposition to the truth of salvation. This opposition is abundantly proved, but what is no less so, is the harmony of the gospel with the most profound wants of our nature; in a word, the perfect humanity of Christianity. When a heart is gained over to the gospel, it is gained *by* the gospel,

by something which is in the gospel ; and lest you should impute this change to some occult power, and, as Saurin expresses it, to some kind of “fabulous enchantment,” that heart will take care to tell you what it is that has won it, and it will tell it you so satisfactorily, that you will only wonder at one thing : why all hearts being equally solicited are not equally won. It is there that the mystery lies, and only there. The gospel is reason itself, and therefore it wins us ; the gospel is reason itself, and therefore it repels us. But in either case, its strength consists in showing itself as it is ; whatever manifests it more fully will render it more powerful, and the more divine it proves itself the more human will it be ; it only ceases to be human, that is to say, suited to and in harmony with humanity, when men, despoiling it of its crown of miracles and its veil of mystery, pretend to bring it down to their own level. When Jesus Christ ceases to be perfect God, he ceases to be perfect man.

When we see to what an extent Christianity pronounces itself contrary to the world, and the world contrary to it, it gives one an idea of an incompatibility so essential and so profound, that one cannot help asking with what hope, and one might even say, with what right, this religion proposes itself to the world, and we have only two hypotheses to choose from : that of an extravagance absolutely unparalleled, or of a secret inspiration and a supernatural power.

Truth is said to be inflexible, and in a certain sense this is true, but in another sense we must declare that truth alone—I mean perfect truth—is flexible, and adapts itself to all the varieties of human nature, to all the events of life ; for it alone is placed high enough to condescend without degradation.

That which pre-eminently distinguishes Christianity amongst all religions and all philosophies, is its *humanity*, and how explain this, how trace it to its source, without referring to the cross ? Take away the mystery of redemption, and the human character of our religion falls with and perhaps before all others.

Evangelical Christianity is a religion equally human and divine, a religion which knows man and “remembers that he is dust.”

There is such a correspondence between the Christian religion and humanity, that each, well apprehended, should lead back to the other, as also should faith towards nature, and nature towards faith.

The first data of Christianity are profoundly embedded in every human soul. In this point of view, Christianity, supernatural as it is in its history, is still an eminently natural thing. It is only necessary to examine ourselves candidly in the presence of the Infinite, to be driven from inference to inference towards the necessity of the Christian religion, and every sincere mind will arrive by this process at a point of sight whence all the details of Christianity will seem to him so perfectly to coincide

with all the events of his soul, and all the data of nature, that, like Thomas at the sight of the divine stigmata, he will fall prostrate, exclaiming, "My Lord and my God!"

Have you ever seen lines traced in sympathetic ink recover, when presented to the fire, from that pale hue which confounded them with the whiteness of the paper on which they were written? This invisible writing is the law of nature, reanimated by the love of God, which is itself reanimated by a prodigious fact: God made man, God dying for our sins. This is the fire, the warmth of which revives on the paper-effaced syllables, words, lines. If man doubted of the moral law, it was not through the want of a sufficiently enlightened reason, but of a regenerated heart. When he once more felt himself bound to believe in God, he recovered his belief in all the rest.

It is in vain for the world to resist; it is Christian in spite of itself; and well were it for the men of the age if to be a Christian in spite of one's-self were enough! But, in short, there is such a congruity between Christianity and human nature, that involuntarily the latter has become impregnated with the former; water does not rise more irresistibly in the capillary tubes of certain substances. Our soul also is provided with this mysterious apparatus, which inhales, which pumps in truth, provided only one extremity be plunged therein. Faith suits it, and consequently virtue, and God who is virtue and truth. Out of all the fragments all the atoms of Christianity

disseminated in the world, the whole truth might be constructed. Each of us, in some one of his actions, some one of his words, renders an involuntary testimony to the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Christ is the loadstone of moral nature ; it all tends toward him, if all does not become united with him.

The gospel alone is as wide as life, and this, because it is infinitely wider ; because in every sense " God is greater than our hearts ;" religion is to life what the real horizon is to the sensible, and it is only in its vast embrace that all true things meet and recognise each other. In a world ordered according to the gospel there is room for everything, but in no other. A complete world where nothing jars, where all is harmonious, is rendered possible only by the gospel, and if this be not evident, it is because the majority of evangelical men (I do not say the evangel) cannot all at once represent to themselves the perfect world with which the gospel is big, and have only, in the first instance, before their eyes, as type of the social world, the chaotic, *rough copy* offered them by actual reality, and calling itself the nature of things.

The gospel is so thoroughly human, that it descends of its own accord, and causes all sincere and thoughtful spirits to descend with it into daily life ; it gently establishes its harmony with nature ; it silently proves its relationship with man ; it associates itself with everything, by purifying, correcting, organizing everything ; it reconstructs within

its own sphere a world where there is scope enough for all our faculties, aliment for all our powers, horizon for all our thoughts ; and this world of the gospel or of grace is, in an excellent sense, the world of man and of nature. Where, you will ask, is this world ? Where must we look for it ? In no constitution that I know of, nor in the morals of any nation, taken in the mass ; but in many an individual, many a family, where it is realized with a marvellous entirety and an admirable sweetness.

Religion becomes human in man ; he transports it into his own sphere, making use, in order to draw it nearer, of the chain that attaches him thereto. Unalterable in itself in the atmosphere of human passions, religion yet is seen to alter more or less in its characteristics and institutions ; some of the dust of this world cleaves to its august feet ; in a word, all that springs from, all that relates to religion,—and to preaching more especially, which is its most living representation,—inevitably receives the impress of time and place.

The most exalted questions are, in a certain sense, those of which the people is the best judge. It cannot have, or at all events can only have at a late period, an opinion of its own upon the system of prohibitory laws in commerce, upon the division of property, the balance of power, the freedom of industry and competition, or monopolies ; but it can have one respecting the supreme interests of the soul, and the truth of the message of peace.

It is for religion that the people has most capacity ; it is in religion that it displays most intelligence.

Christianity is an idea, a thought of God. This thought, simple and grand, because divine, ramifies into a multitude of thoughts, which are linked by their extremities with all parts of our moral existence. From God to man, and from man to God, the Christian idea is communicated, and circulates through a thousand points in regular and continuous motion. The divine life and the human blend with each other, like the blood of the arteries with that of the veins, and the blood of the veins with that of the arteries, without a drop escaping and being lost. This idea, which is all God's, reveals itself entirely in facts. Supreme model of the highest facts, eternal wisdom has taught less than it has narrated, or rather acted. It has written out its thought in transcendent facts : in the creation of the world ; the blessing and the curse pronounced on the first pair ; the deluge ; the vocation of the father of the faithful ; the mission of Moses ; the worship of Jerusalem ; the miracles ; the prophets ; the birth and the death of Jesus. All these facts, and a thousand other intermediary ones, are linked one with the other, and all together, with the design of God, in as organic, as intimate a union as that of the hand with the arm, the head with the body. The oneness of idea in this great creation reveals itself to the mind of some, the hearts of all, and proves itself incontrovertibly by the unity that it re-establishes in the human being ; for it is

impossible that that which produces unity should lack unity. All these facts, consummated in space and time, all apparently contingent and concrete, and foreign to all abstraction, are nevertheless a philosophy, and, for such as comprehend them, the only philosophy. They are the realization in time of eternal necessities, the expression of natural truths in the supernatural order. Everything therein is at once perfectly human and perfectly divine, a union of which Jesus Christ has been the type and the personification; and they are not human although divine, but human because they are divine, and *vice versa*. Most rich and living philosophy, which interests at once all faculties, exercises them all, which proportions itself to all capacities, as it has abundantly proved; since, having been the nurse of the mightiest minds, it is also the most energetic instrument of the people's culture, and the infallible means of awakening and developing dormant intellects!

The truths of the gospel are not truths because spoken by God; rather God has spoken them because they are truths. If they are true, they are human; and as such they must find their confirmation in all the essential elements of our nature, and in all parts of our experience. This confirmation is for many the best and the only proof of the truths of the gospel; as for others, their creed may indeed be exact and complete, but their faith is neither personal nor living; it is incapable of be-

coming the principle of their internal life, so long as it has not received this confirmation of their conscience.¹

The fact of the gospel, its distinctive feature, is the grafting divine sentiments upon a human nature.

The glory of the gospel is not only to have divinized truth, but to have humanized it. Jesus Christ is both God and man, and it is the same with his doctrine. It is drawn at once from the depths of God and the depths of man ; it touches, by each of its extremities, the mysteries of the divine essence, and the mysteries of human nature : one only mystery, it is true ; for the doctrine of man, and that of God, are two lines which, tending towards each other, finally join and blend at the vertex of the angle, at a point which is one and indivisible, where all distinctions elude the eye, and all analysis is impossible to the mind. Without denying the duality of terms, and without proclaiming any other intention than that of defining the relation between them, religions and philosophies had only been able to do justice to one of these at a time ; their doctrine was alternately full of God to the exclusion of man, or full of man to the prejudice of God. The union in Jesus Christ of all the fulness of Deity with all the fulness of humanity, was the programme or symbol in the same time as the support and sub-

¹ Vinet afterwards added the following explanation :—He meant to say that things are what they are, and that the word that expresses them only expresses, and does not create them.

stance of a new doctrine. This unity without confusion, consummated at once in thought and fact, was the *Fiat lux* of a new genesis, the organization of a second chaos, the fruit of sin ; for, in a spiritual sense, the earth was a second time “without form, and void,” as on the eve of the first day.

And observe too, that these two elements, the human and divine, are not the two terms of an antinomy, but the two hemispheres, or, if you prefer it, the two poles of the same truth. Revealed truth is only human because it is divine ; is divine only on condition of being human. We are speaking here from a human stand-point ; we cannot occupy any other. It is certain that man has within him the double want of belonging entirely to God and being entirely man ; nothing can withdraw him from the empire of this double necessity ; nothing can even conceal it from him entirely. The religion which does not give him wholly to God does not correspond with the first of these intimate laws of his being, and for this very cause it is not human ; the religion which deprives him of his humanity removes him from God while pretending to restore him to God, and hence is no longer divine, for the very reason that it is no longer human. Religion is a relation : the suppression of one of the two terms destroys it. Whichever term be suppressed the result is the same ; either God no longer exists for man, or man no longer exists for God. Religion supposes God in the plenitude of his divinity, man in the

plenitude of his humanity ; two beings, two persons, and not two names.

All heresies that have sprung up in the midst of Christianity, as well as all systems conceived external to Christianity, tend to diminish man or to diminish God. The religion of the heart, a living faith, preserves an admirable equilibrium between these two extremes. Theology finds it very difficult not to lean to the one or the other. Why ? Because it always remains at some distance from the vertex of the angle on one or other of the sides, while a living faith occupies the vertex itself, in the mystery or in the life, whence it dominates the two sides, or two inclines of truth, without leaning to either. Piety unites them both by an ineffable process, which it can no more explain than we can the union of mind and matter in our own existence ; a union or conciliation that life necessarily realizes and manifests. Theology or science distinguishes, that is its province ; but to distinguish is hypothetically to divide, and by dint of dividing one may forget to combine. Different eras, besides, impose different laws upon theology ; sometimes it takes up the cause of the divine element compromised ; sometimes it flies to the aid of the human element threatened, and it superabounds in the direction of the particular task that circumstances or the condition of the general mind imposes upon it ; it alternately diminishes the divinity and the humanity either in God and in man, and in Jesus Christ, who is both perfectly.

Theologians who avoid each of these excesses are rare, and those who know how to do so, do not always pass in the eyes of the vulgar for true theologians.

A religion completely inimical to the inclinations of the natural man could not possibly be a true religion. A religion made in the image of man is false; the only true one is that which professes to transform man into its own image.

Amongst the different characteristics of Christianity, there is one which peculiarly deserves our admiration, this is its universalism, or, if you will, its extreme humanity, by which I understand its exquisite property of suiting not merely this or that country, political constitution, or class of individuals, but all that bear a human heart. I say that this is a divine character, for what man could have invented it? Separate from the accidental qualities that may characterize men in given circumstances, those which form the general and invariable groundwork of humanity, you will see that Christianity is perfectly adapted to these last, and that through all peculiarities of epoch, character, condition, political state, it seeks out and lays strong hold on those leading points that nothing can efface. The doctrine of redemption is eminently human, since all beings of the human family have had the belief in, or the desire for, or the need of it. Another thing which brings home to us this universal character of Christianity, is the flexibility with which it bends itself to the different characters, different

moral temperaments, of those who profess it. It is impossible, without such a violent upsetting of our nature as would have deprived us of the dignity of moral beings, to bring all minds into line, and to reduce them to a perfectly identical belief on all points. And be it observed, were there not these points of division there would be little life in Christianity. We require the stimulant. Wherever it has been found possible, by holding back revelation from the eyes of a people, to make it adopt a creed wrapped up and entirely concealed in the dogma of the authority of the Church,—a mystery far more inconceivable than all the mysteries thus intended to be withdrawn from examination;—wherever faith is thus put under ward, there is either death or rebellion. A regulated, moderated, yet active life, can only exist where the power of inquiry provokes divergences and animated discussions. Let not these conflicts excite any alarm; they are salutary, and only dangerous where some other force than the moral and intellectual intervenes.

3. *The Folly and Good Sense of Christianity.*

Christianity has not allowed to infidelity the pleasure of being first to tax it with folly. It hastens to lay this to its own charge; it professes the bold intention of saving men by foolishness.

The world will always call him mad who insists that he alone is wise.

True religion is a word of God; and if God has

spoken, what he has said is necessarily foolishness to those who do not believe.

The gospel attracts for the same reasons that it revolts ; it is strong by its very foolishness ; and that which has made it endure for eighteen centuries, and in every generation renews its youth like the eagle's, is not, be very sure, what is called its moral beauty, but rather that which the world taxes with foolishness,—its doctrines of original sin, redemption, and grace ; those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Christianity, which is a doctrine of conciliation, because a doctrine of truth, must needs have signalized in the world, in life, and in the human heart as many contrasts as it has levelled. It is possible to obtain a kind of unity, and this has been attempted a thousand times, by giving up one of the terms of the relation ; then the combat ceases from want of combatants. The gospel, however, without hesitation, brings together *contradictory truths*, and conciliates by absorbing them into a higher truth. The religion of conciliation ought then to be the religion of contrasts. Accordingly, Christianity has sowed antithesis broadcast in the thought and style of modern times ; so that,—we would observe in passing,—the sort of simplicity which we so much admire in the classical productions of antiquity is hardly within our reach.

Nothing finer than the coincidence, the mutual sympathy, of Christianity and good sense. Revealed truth is a thousand times higher than this good sense; but truth is necessarily at one with it; and it is striking to see how, Christianity being given, good sense in all things adapts itself to and delights in it.

It is fortunate that the large portion of society which has only got time for action, and no leisure at all for observing and generalizing, finds in Christianity a second common sense better and more complete than the first. Christianity is, in all acceptations of the term, the good sense of humanity; and when it has become an affection and life of the heart, it has the strength and character of an instinct. Christianity, simply understood and simply applied, undeniably prevents the greatest errors; the gospel is in essentials the best treatise on education, and in general the child that is brought up Christianly is brought up well.

We have always considered Christianity to be not only compatible, but admirably harmonious, with all the developments of the individual and society, because superhuman—human and superhuman both.

Christianity has created a new human nature, or rather has drawn it out from beneath its ruins, and re-instated it for ever. We believe ourselves to be only obeying an instinct, or the voice of conscience, and we are right; but we forget that before Jesus

Christ that instinct was dormant, that voice unheard. We are Christians in spite of ourselves, and unwittingly; and amongst the adversaries of Christianity the most honest are those who base their attack on a principle that they owe to it alone.

II.—DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. *Unity and Diversity.*

Every truth, in a system which is truth itself, demands another truth as complement or as support, until finally the whole chain gone through be found to reunite indissolubly the infinity of our misery to the infinity of divine wisdom and goodness.

There is nothing open to choice in the gospel; we must accept all, must reject nothing; and if Paul could say, in speaking of the alimentary productions of the physical world, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, provided it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. iv. 4),—how should we not say this of the gospel, that other creation, that other world, where certainly all is good?

Christianity may compare itself to the atmospheric air, composed of several elements, any one of which inhaled alone would kill us, but combined supports our life. It is in the very centre of the gospel that we must draw life, and grasp at once the whole truth.

Christianity is composed only of necessary parts;

whatever it teaches is essential to it; one of its elements would not exist without the other, nor can one perish without all the others being involved; the life is entire at all points, as in a body where every part was vital: wherever that body was wounded death would follow.

Although in religious truth it is possible to distinguish, as indeed we have already done, between the part of the intellect and that of the heart, this truth is nevertheless *one*, and only derives the whole of its character from the combination of thought and feeling applied to one same fact, in such wise that we can only gain the whole feeling by means of the whole idea; and conversely, the whole of the idea by means of the whole of the feeling. The whole truth is only to be apprehended by the whole man, and although it may often be impossible for the complete and the theoretical Christian to define in what they differ; although in spite of a vague sentiment of discordance, they find themselves at one on all points; although language has no signs for such delicate shades, yet these shades in their delicacy are very important, and were there words to express them it would be soon seen that the idea of these two men is not exactly similar, and that even as regards speculation the theoretical Christian does not possess all the truth possessed by the practical.

The gospel contains several compendiums of itself. That expression of St. John, for instance, "God is

love ;" does it not sum up the whole of the gospel just as diamonds reflect the whole sky from one facet ?

The groundwork of Christianity, inasmuch as it is history, is not subjective, but objective, external to the *Ego*, like all other histories. Our passions may distort the glance that we cast upon facts, but we cannot mingle our substance with these facts,—identify them with ourselves, alter them in themselves ; objective by nature, they remain what they are. We shall find them again, if it be not more correct to say that they will find us again ; the monuments subsist, and are indestructible ; the rules of criticism subsist, and are immutable ; will can do nothing directly here.

Christianity is not a system of the universe ; not a cosmology. It confines itself to man, and in man to the soul. It speaks, no doubt, of more general subjects, but only because its special object compels it to do so.

As everything is connected in a world the idea of which is one, Christianity, the knowledge of things human and divine, becomes in this sense a knowledge of the world. It directs, impels our search, it is in all things the way of truth ; but this it only does in passing, by which we do not mean that Christianity teaches man to have no other than self-interest. On the contrary, the gospel makes the glory of God one of the highest of human hopes, one of the elements of human felicity.

The Christian religion is one of internal observa-

tion; by this it begins, continues, ends. It has been reproached with the *mysticism* to which it has seemed to lead; but in truth it is one of its glories to be exposed to this reproach. Mysticism proves the power of a religion which has rendered uncultured men capable of living in the interior of their soul, observing its lightest movements, and absorbing themselves in the contemplation of these moral phenomena. But if mysticism be the rock ahead on which some run, for others a wonderful acquaintance with the moral forces, which serve as lever and counterpoise to human life; a singularly systematic view of the elements of the will, a remarkable consistency in moral doctrines, have been the fruit of that internal study that Christianity has recommended to them, or rather of which it has given them the want and the habit. The best of all logic, the logic of duty, is one of the distinctive characteristics of the Christian. We should be safe in saying that in the strict acceptation of the word, he alone has *principles*; at all events, no one would presume to boast of having, with regard to duty, such definite and connected ideas as the Christian; and here logical *inference*, a most valuable thing no doubt, in no way detracts from the beauty of life and its true harmony.

Two insoluble problems presented themselves; two contraries had to be twice reconciled: in God, holiness and mercy; in man, egotism and love. The gospel seizes hold of man by the two constituent

elements of his being : the *Self* and the *Not-Self*. These are two forces, the one centripetal, which constantly tends to concentrate us in ourselves ; the other centrifugal, which snatches us away from self to carry us to God. Relieved from the reproaches of conscience and the terrors of death, man finds himself transported into a state of peace and joy ; the incessant exigencies of the *Me* are silent in presence of the inexhaustible aliment with which the soul is satisfied. To this sentiment succeeds another ; in the transport of its gratitude, the soul is conscious of a new and powerful bond established between it and God ; it identifies itself with him from whom it has received all, who, in giving *himself*, has exceeded all the soul's desires and all its thoughts ; it detaches itself from self—in a word, it loves. Conceive, if you can, a system more harmonious to the bases of human nature, grasping its two poles at one and the same time, satisfying absolutely one part of its nature, bringing it back to God by the other. And all this by one fact.

The religion of God, if there be one, cannot tolerate mediocrity ; the mediocre is the false.

Christianity is not merely a doctrine ; it is a point of view, a stand-point from which we see all things, and all things under a new and original aspect.

2. *Identity of Morality and Doctrine.*

I know not whether some may not be scandalized to see here morality and religion in some sort iden-

tified. There is, however, no occasion to be offended ; far otherwise indeed, the dignity and power of religion depending precisely upon this union, or if you will, this confusion. A religion which is not morality, is even less valuable than a morality which is not religion. Instead of disguising, we must state this fact most explicitly and loudly, in order that the world may cease to decry dogma, by representing it as a gratuitous appendage, an inconvenient excrescence of morality. Let it be thoroughly understood that there is not a fibre in religion, not an idea, not an article of faith, which is not morality.

The moral element is the only one which, transforming a vague fluid into a solid body, can, so to speak, bring about the crystallization of the religious sentiment. Every religion where the conscience does not play the principal part is nothing but a poetry or philosophism, and soon becomes merged in an avowed or disavowed Pantheism.

All religion implies morality ; religion is a morality stamped with the divine seal. The people in their just instinct have always understood it thus. They feel that the end of all religion must be to correct man, and to render him more and more submissive to the law of duty. They equally take for granted that a man has religion when he has morals, and morals when he has religion.

For the people, morality, separated from religion, amounts to nothing, absolutely nothing. They will

never permanently connect the idea of duty with any other than the idea of God. The people has not and cannot share those so-called moral motives of the man of high culture. Honour, human dignity, wide sympathies, these, generally speaking, are out of its way altogether. Not having all these brilliant idols, it has only God, and is satisfied with him; the fear of God stands in instead of all these things, and more than this, it bestows them all. Outside of the religious sentiment the people has them not, has nothing, nothing but what remains in all men, some instincts, a faint glimmer, a few sparks, that physical wants and superstition but too easily extinguish. To wish to give the people a morality independent of religion is, in my opinion, the most utter chimera. In point of fact, there is neither for rich nor poor any true morality without religion; the former, however, have certain means of deceiving themselves on this head, but the illusion does not descend to a lower class.

Morality is nothing but faith developed; nevertheless it is certain, that the principle being laid down, the consequences may have to be more or less waited for; they never develop themselves without the labour *ad hoc* of the intellect or the conscience.

Once re-attached to God, we are re-attached to the whole moral law which he contains in himself; truth re-established on this point is re-established on all; light shed on our relations with God

radiates on all the circle of our relations and our duties.

There is no true religion but that which springs from the same sources as morality, and which in its principle and development is morality. Religion is duty rising to God, re-linked with him ; true religion has therefore its seat in the conscience. All that takes the name of religion, without springing from the conscience, fails to reach it, and but usurps its name ; it is merely and simply poetry ; it is not even religious poetry. God perceived by imagination, adored, revered by imagination, is not God. The poetic worship is not worship, and that ecstatic contemplation to which the appellation of worship is given, would deserve it just as much and just as little, if it had for object, instead of that vague something called God, the sky, the shore, the universe, the centripetal or centrifugal force.

Christian dogma is at the same time a morality, but a Christian morality ; to wish to draw a distinction between them is like distinguishing between a stream and its source. Christian dogma is no sooner expressed than it determines the life ; the true name of God gives the true name of man ; to say what God is, is to say what man ought to be.

True Christianity is practical ; everything in it tends towards action ; morality stands so near dogma that you can hardly distinguish it therefrom. At first, and in intention, Christianity is morality. God does not define himself, describe himself therein

without further preamble he prescribes and commands. Speculation only comes in occasionally, and occupies the second place ; the nature of God reveals itself to us by his will ; what he commands teaches us what he is. Admirable conciliation of two characters which in the natural man too often repel and contradict each other : the religious system which most develops thought most impels to action ; speculation and practice further each other, and positive Christianity does not give rise to two kinds of Christians,—those who think and those who act : thus the powers of our nature harmonize, counter-balance, and promote each other ; thus to know and to act, these two things which make the man, make more especially the Christian. Nor is this all : Christianity, the work of a God who knows what is in man, organizes him admirably for life such as it is, and for all parts of life ; leaves no corner of the field of human existence fallow, furnishes thinkers for science, arms for material labour ; accepts nature in its most diverse facts, the earth and its different regions, life and all its circumstances,—in a word, man as a whole, and everywhere, authorizes, disposes, and impels him to action. It is the religion of reality, of action, of life. It is wisdom equally adapted for God and man. It at once stimulates and sanctifies activity.

In Christianity, as you are aware, the dogma is in the moral teaching, as the moral teaching in the dogma. The dogmas are supernatural facts, in which

is expressed a moral thought, so that from one end to the other of this religion, all is moral.

It is most certain that the religious spirit gives to the moral sentiment an exquisite delicacy, a susceptibility that the least imperfection revolts, a penetration which the most subtle and best disguised elements of moral evil can in no way elude.

Christianity is a doctrine, but it is moreover a fact and a life. Christianity is what Christians are; nay, Christians in their deeds and character are Christianity. In one sense it makes Christians what they are, in another it is made by Christians what it is.

Christianity is something more than a system of dogmas, it is pre-eminently the principle of a new life. The foolishness of the Christian does not entirely consist in the doctrines he adopts; it is also, nay, much more, to be found in the measures that regulate his conduct. He is beside himself in practice as well as theory.

We must never forget that the gospel, by incorporating morals and dogma, and personifying each of its ideas, has disconcerted the systematic spirit, and in every way rendered it incumbent on us to have recourse to it as a whole in order to seize its meaning.

I do not know what those can be thinking of who would consent to receive evangelical morality, on the one condition that we spared them dogmas. In the first place, this is to wish to transplant a tree

separated from its roots, and in the next, where does dogma end and morality begin? I despair of any pointing me out the place. In the gospel, dogma is already morality; morality is still dogma; and their respective character depends on that intimate and organic union which makes one the complement of the other. If you sever the living tie that joins them; if you tear morality from out religion, like a leaf from the middle of a book, you will have a morality like all moralities, which you may call beautiful and sublime if you will, but which will no more bind you to perfection than any other. But, seen in its proper place, as part of the whole to which it is co-ordinate, evangelical morality puts forward, we repeat, immense claims. The gospel exacts from the soul an entire, unreserved surrender of all it wills, all it loves, and all it is. This is the indispensable condition of true morality, for the least refuge, the most modest retreat, suffices to the will; the smallest corner of the soul is for it a world where it dilates and displays itself; an indivisible point would suffice it, none so narrow, but that it may find itself there in its entirety, may enjoy a plenary triumph; it is not space that concerns it, but existence; the *Ego* takes no room, it only demands life; not to be absolutely annihilated is all it requests, for then it is everything. Now it is this last refuge, this mathematical point, that evangelical morality denies to the will.

Everything in the Christian religion is moral; the

divinity of Christ, redemption, all mysteries whatsoever, are at bottom morality; their end is the salvation and regeneration of man.

Morality ought to be far more repugnant than dogma; the latter is consoling, the first crushing.

Say what you will, ye admirers of the morality of Jesus Christ, who will have nothing of him but his morality, it was for this he was crucified; it was his morality that was nailed to the cross. No, say you, it was his doctrine. Let us lay aside words and look at facts. I should like to know what part of Christ's teaching is not morality; I should wish to be told whether his proclamation of God's rights; the necessity of propitiating his justice and imploring his pardon; the gratitude excited by his mercy; the obligation to live according to this gratitude; the imitation of his ways and his character; the having recourse to his grace and his spirit,—whether all this be not as much morality as the system of our duties, as sons, husbands, fathers, citizens? From one end to the other the gospel is morality, and what is more, one closely connected moral sequence; one single moral idea, developing itself by its natural energy, and ramifying by its own gravity into all the channels prepared for it by the human heart and life. Now try to lift one extremity of the chain without moving the other.

There is no limit, no interval between religion and morality. They are so organically united that the one cannot be taken without the other. You could

not adopt the true morality without at the same time adopting the true religion. But since you seek to have the one without the other, or, which comes to the same thing, since you take the religion because of the morality, it is plain that you are not aiming, even in matters of morality, at absolute, but only at relative truth, and this we repeat to come down from heaven to earth.

3. *Final Character.*

Let us all combine to greet with our benedictions this only complete religion which answers to all man's needs, by offering to each of his faculties an inexhaustible aliment; which is at once the religion of the imagination, to which it opens out magnificent perspectives; the religion of the heart, that it intenerates by the manifestation of a love above all love; the religion of thought, that it attaches to the contemplation of the most real and best-ordered system; the religion of the conscience, that it renders at once more susceptible and more tranquil; but above all, the religion of the grace and love of God, for it is necessarily all these at once; how should the whole of truth fail to satisfy the whole of man?

Let us offer the homage of our admiration to this religion which reconciles all contrasts,—religion at once of justice and grace, of peace and love, of obedience and liberty, of activity and rest, of

faith and reason ; for if error has divided, separated everything in man, if it has made the human soul a vast scene of contradictions, it pertains to truth to bring all back to unity.

He who, in the midst of Hebrew nationalism, in presence of Roman egotism, in the height of the usurpations of the individual and political *Ego*, proclaimed with his lips, realized in his life, consecrated by his death, the principle of human brotherhood, of brotherhood in God,—He has for ever closed the path of discovery, and conquest in the moral world. All that may henceforth be done in the interests of humanity will flow from the loving principle he has laid down ; all that may be attempted for humanity outside of that principle, and of Christian inspiration, will either remain in the condition of mere theory, or will see its pretended character of originality wear away the first step it takes. Cosmopolitanism was born with Christianity. Just as Christ bore all humanity in his heart, so each Christian bears in his that “noble burden of the human race,” as Bossuet expresses it. Those who have inducted the fine-sounding word *humanitarianism*, are not to suppose that they have invented charity ; nor, because they have formularized after their own fashion the future of humanity, are they to flatter themselves that they have given to this notion of humanity any greater reality to the human conscience than it had before. The one important thing is *to love well* ; this right love, which is

charity, is in its nature expansive and universal. In teaching me to love my neighbour, Christ makes me love all mankind, and if it may be truly said, "He who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love humanity which he has not seen?" it might be asked with equal truth, "He who loves his brother whom he sees, how shall he not love humanity which he does not see?" Christianity proceeds from the simple to the complex, the individual to the mass; an inverse method is impossible. I should have little faith in religion and philosophies which did not impose on love the necessary novitiate of domestic or private charity; which embraced the universe in an ideal clasp, from which each individual might be excluded, and which, while commanding us to love on a great scale, might perhaps leave us free to hate on a small. I fear that, in such a straining of the human eye, the nearest objects might escape notice; I fear that anxiety for collective good would distract from that inspired by the good of the individual; and that all these personal *Egos*, abdicating, as it were, and losing themselves in I know not what universal *Ego*, would be mere ciphers, would be men no longer. The philosophies of the present day have a great tendency to annul individuality; this would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to us, for humanity has no heart, and love, and consequently life, only resides in the individual.

But this will not prevent Christianity from asso-

ciating itself with all ideas and all undertakings which embrace vast interests, or those of the whole human race. Christianity is neither economist nor publicist, but it makes use of all as it is useful to all. Long before modern times, it had created cosmopolites by profession, in the form of missionaries. St. Columba, Francis Xavier, what else were they? And in our days how many of their emulators go and carry to distant peoples, between the pages of the gospel, civilisation, light, liberty! But Christianity does not acknowledge in any one the right and the power to cure diseased humanity, and to reconstitute society without its aid. It does not believe in a charity which has not gone through, under its own auspices, a preliminary probation, a delay if you will, in the exercise of daily and obscure acts of devotedness. *Political charity*, previous to *Christian policy*, appears to it a well-sounding phrase; a striking antithesis perhaps, but nothing more. At sight of this scientifically formularized philanthropy contemplating itself admiringly in writings which are probably its only works, the Christian sighs, and the genius of evil—whose dark shadow lengthens athwart society, as at the fall of the day the shadow of the mountains athwart the plains—shrugs his shoulders, and smiles. These illusions delight him, these mistakes reassure; he likes to have such wise enemies. His fears go in another direction: “Jesus, I know,” he says, “and Paul I know; but who are ye?”

Eternity and truth are inseparable, just as are error and decay. All that is true is eternal; all that is not eternal has but the name and the semblance of being. God has made all that appears out of what appeared not. The spirit, whose centre is God, existed before matter and without matter; matter was created only to serve as an instrument to the created spirit,—as form to its life, and object to its activity. But it has no intrinsic, absolute value; it derives all that it has from its aims and its employment. The spirit alone, derived from God, like to God, capable of uniting itself with God,—the spirit alone is immortal, because it is worthy of being so. One single soul is worth all the world; or rather, all the worlds, actual and possible, put together, cannot be compared, cannot measure themselves, with one single soul. The spirit alone deserves in itself the chief attention of man, because it has obtained the chief attention of God, and inasmuch as the spirit, and all that belongs to it, is invisible, one may say with truth that it is only things unseen which deserve to be looked at, and that we must, in a certain sense, be blind to all besides.

All that is true is Christian. All truths are scattered in the world, and the great Christian truth is a centre pointed out to them, a confluence whither all these truths, separated from each other, and powerless in their isolation, tend, like so many rivers, there to unite and to form a whole.

Where should we now be if there were nothing

absolute? And what would have become of the gospel? If the principles of the gospel are not absolute, what is it? For this is precisely its character, and it is by this that it offends.

III.—MODE OF ACTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. *A Life.*

Christianity, far from destroying natural sensibility, exercises and develops it.

Christianity is only strong by the spontaneity which is essential to it.

The glory of Christianity is to rule only by influencing, and under the form of liberty.

Christianity at bottom is not a book, though it has a book for basis and support; it is a fact, and a moral fact.

Truth is life; to see and to live are only one and the same; truth is not a form, but a substance, and there is but one way to *know* the truth, namely, to *be in* the truth.

Christianity is not a system external to us, it is a life within us. Truth is not a name, a formula; truth is being, is life; is consequently love, since in the moral world, which is the true, it is love which is life and being, and that in this sphere whatever is not love has no existence.

Truth, the whole truth, truth in the heart, this is the want of us, each and all, and our first want, for truth is the source of love, as love is the source of happiness.

The religion of the gospel is a force, a sap pervading the whole of life. It is not a system of arguments, it is a fact, of a nature to occupy the heart and mould the conduct. It is by a fact, a unique but new fact, that God has seen fit to act upon humanity. There already existed an immense and magnificent fact, which at first sight might have seemed calculated to take possession of the heart and mind of man,—the works of creation. But this primordial fact had lost its power, man having lost that of perceiving it. Experience had proved, as in our days it still proves, that the fact of creation was one worn out, exhausted, incapable of regenerating the human soul; another therefore was needed. Then was produced the great fact of the gospel, in which the whole idea of God and the whole nature of man have met and embraced.

In the gospel, the question is no longer whether God can be appeased towards man; he is so by the very fact of the appearance of Jesus Christ, and before he speaks to us of virtue, he speaks of grace, remission, salvation. This fact accepted changes the whole position of man; operates a revolution in his entire being; moves, draws, renews him. But it is only when, after having received this impression, man studies the cause of his renewal, that he observes with admiration the wonderful beauty of the system as such.

Wherever you recognise life, truth is not far off; wherever, too, a part of truth is frankly avowed and

cordially professed, the other parts, although indeed hidden in silence and shadow, and perhaps even apparently rejected, yet secretly dwells in the soul, side by side with the other elements from which they are inseparable. If Jesus Christ can be divided in theory, that is to say, in formulas and words which are external to man, he cannot be so in the consciousness, which is the man himself.

A Christian is not a man who has expelled one theory from his mind to make room for another ; he is a humbled sinner, who feels that he only exists through mercy ; who adores and blesses this mercy ; who nourishes himself with the promises of God as his only hope ; who incessantly strips off all pretensions of his own ; who offers himself daily as a sacrifice to his Saviour, and no longer lives himself, but lets Christ live in him, and determines that the life which he still must live in the flesh shall be lived by faith in the Son of God, who has loved him.

As a bond of union with another Christian, the systematic professor requires more than Christianity ; he wants, if not equality of rank, at least equality of culture ; he has nothing to say to the illiterate believer ; he is ill at ease in his society ; he dreads it. He needs also a similitude of views,—a shade of difference disturbs him ; he cannot rise above the impression that an irrational opinion produces ; he does not know how to abstract himself from the form to attach himself to the essence, which is

Christianity itself. He seeks rather for equals and counterparts than for brothers.

The childhood of the heart is that which distinguishes the practical Christian from the theoretical. But this childhood of the heart, what is it but humility?

2. *Individual Character.*

Christianity is the positive advent of individual religion. Nothing short of this could suffice. This only deserved the name of religion, and if this goal has not been reached, Christianity is still but a transitory and intermediate fact; the *worship in spirit and truth* is not yet inaugurated; and it is prematurely that Jesus Christ has announced to the universe, *It is finished!*

Individual religion, if it be permitted to give it this name, has for motto that beautiful expression of a poet: "Yes, it is a hidden God in whom we must believe." Intrusted to the heart, in the most secret chambers of which it dwells, it fixes and concentrates its empire there, and seeks not to display it without this sanctuary. It animates the inner life, rules, characterizes it; by a gentle magnetic influence it draws, each to each, all who are actuated by the same desires and encouraged by the same hopes; and in intimate communion and common prayer raises their souls together towards the only Being capable of satisfying every desire and realizing every hope. For this religion everywhere temples rise; and if it

gather the worshippers in buildings made by the hand of man, they are more imposing by their purpose than by their outward form and dimensions. These temples are simple houses of prayer, where there is nothing solemn but silence and meditation, no majesty but that of the presence of the Invisible God. The high priest consecrated by the Holy Spirit,—the minister whose voice fills the humble building,—has for title to the confidence of his hearers their own choice of him; the only distinction to which he aspires is to obtain that confidence, to merit their love; he has been led by an internal vocation into the ministry, his ambition, leaving behind all earthly perspectives, has only heaven for its goal. Such a religion has at first, and perhaps for a long time, few members, but all these are believers. It never languishes; always energetic and zealous, because free, it can sooner cease to exist than leave off acting; it spreads from neighbour to neighbour, by insinuation, example, sympathy. It has as yet no name, although it has covered a vast extent with its adherents and friends; and by a correspondence, secret, yet without mystery, it keeps up living and fruitful relations between its dispersed members. Not being able to lean on any external force, it rests entirely on the zeal which founded it; nothing tends to mislead it as to its own state. United, identified with public power, it might have been so self-deceived as to glorify itself in languor and rejoice in death; reduced to moral force, it is

safe from any such mistake ; it is always capable of measuring its strength or appreciating its progress ; in a word, it is powerful as the soul, which is immortal ;—in the other case it would have been strong as this world, which passeth away.

Amongst the characteristic and essential features of the work of Christ we must number this : Christ has consecrated the principle of religious individuality.

A religion individual in principle knows nothing of the esoteric ; it repudiates it altogether, whereas all other religions not only tolerate, but presuppose it. They even do this in virtue of their socialist principles. Christianity (and we offer this fact to the meditation of our readers) is, among the religions of civilized people, the only one in which the esoteric has no admittance. And if she does not allow it, it is because it is intensely repugnant to her, as contradicting her in her essence.

The Christian religion acts beneficently in all spheres, but its special aim is the salvation of souls. Jesus did not die for societies, but individuals. Religion flourishes where many men believe, and live upon their faith. All external results derived from it are worthy of admiration, but we must not lose sight of the main point in the accessories. Without making any concession to eclecticism we may say that for each man truth is composite, and that he for whom it is not so, is deficient, up to a certain point, either in earnestness or sincerity. Truth

has not fixed its exclusive domicile in any symbol or in any Church ; it is in the gospel ; and he who, with a simple and ingenuous heart, seeks it there alone will find eventually that he has in himself something of Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Quesnel, Bossuet, I mean something of the Church, the sect, or the school of all these.

Truth needs to personify itself in every man. In order the better to display its unity, it aims at multiplying itself as many times as there are souls to receive it ; it does not esteem itself enriched by our losses ; makes no ruins around it ; a living thing itself, it has no fellowship with death ; it raises a Peter, a James, a John, to a St. John, a St. James, a St. Peter ; but in adding sanctity it does not take humanity away.

From man to man truth is one only in the sentiment we have of it ; but there would be as many formulas of it as there are minds, if the instrument, I mean language, were sufficiently plastic, and if the subtlety of conception equalled in each one the delicacy of the impression.

Every particular truth being a part of general truth, a fragment of the gospel presents itself in its proportions as did the gospel itself ; there is always the conflict of the visible with the invisible, of the spirit with the senses, of duty with interest, of the right with the useful. In general, and at first sight (for the *second sight* only belongs to faith in morality, in science to genius), what appears, is not

harmony but opposition. God alone is the mediator, but the secret mediator, of this great antinomy. When it is visibly reconciled, every one is surprised not to have foreseen and given the solution beforehand, so simple was it, so inevitable.

Christianity has made this revolution in the world : it has given to truth a dignity independent of time and number ; it has decreed that truth should be believed and respected for itself ; it has asserted that every one was able to be judge of the truth ; that the most ignorant and most isolated might find within himself sufficient reason for believing it ; that he need not, in order to make up his own mind, examine whether those around him believed ; and that he was able on occasion to be the only one of his opinion, and yet to persist in it. Christianity has determined to found a race of men who should believe in the truth, not in number, nor time, nor force ; men consequently who should be ready to pass for madmen.

The religious sentiment is so essentially individual and free, that whatever is taken from its liberty and individuality is taken from its life.

Social truth is not the first object of revelation ; doubtless it will infallibly make its appearance with the rest, for religious truth embraces all our relations and governs all our life ; but it is not by it that the work of God within us begins, and if it did so begin it would not be the work of God.

The consequences of sin may be abolished, but nothing can alter the fact of sin having existed.

Virtue is not innocence ; the sentiments of truth that man once enjoyed *as man*, he can henceforth only enjoy *as an individual*, in virtue of his individual efforts, and in proportion to these. Faith, a personal fact, has replaced sight, a generic fact. Religion, which before this ordeal might have been the fact of all in general, is, since, only the fact of each one in particular, and cannot become a collective thing, except by means of the agreement of many in one same conviction, and exactly in proportion to this conviction.

In truth, your Christianity, be it ever so individual (and according to me, it can never be sufficiently so), is extracted, expressed, so to say, from the Christianity of sixty generations ; the Christian as well as the physical man, carries in his veins the blood of thousands and thousands, whose successive and combined alliances converge and terminate in him. Ages and nations have been at work for each of you ; each is the heir of antiquity, and the product of a whole world.

The new economy was to open by an appeal to individuality, and this appeal was to have for consequence a diminishing, alas ! a diminishing so considerable, that St. Paul in the same passage calls it the fall of the Jewish people. If this diminishing be not in itself the cause of the riches of the world, it is at least their inevitable condition ; the new people could not grow great, could not even be formed, except at the cost of the diminishing of the old ; the

world could only be enriched by the poverty of Israel.

3. *Regenerating Influence.*

How blind are they who have reproached Christianity with being inapplicable! Of all religious doctrines and philosophic systems, it is, on the contrary, the only one which is applicable, the only one of which the whole forms can be assumed by society, and which in its turn takes the whole form of society.

It is very inappropriate surely to tax with sterility a religion which has stirred so many ideas, given the waking touch to so many geniuses, and, what is even better, cultivates so many intellects that philosophy would have left fallow—a religion which philosophers cannot leave out of account, which pre-occupies them in spite of themselves, and with which, however they object to it, they are still obliged to make their systems square. In point of research and study, what has it prevented, what has it condemned, except what common sense had condemned before? I mean those speculations which the human consciousness is not admitted to verify.

All the elevated and impartial amongst thinkers have long ago recognised the intellectual and moral wealth of Christianity; what it has given to arts, literature, civilisation, and what it continually goes on giving, is incalculable.

It has been said of certain rich and forcible lan-

guages, that they carry their man. Christianity, which one might also call an internal language, carries its man or its world. Our thinkings add nothing to it; it incessantly adds to our thinking, *magnum mentis incrementum*. It is for all those that its glance attracts, the principle of an originality, in some sort impersonal, the ceaselessly open source of great, new, and touching ideas, which, confounding themselves with their source, oblige the mind that has conceived them to doubt whether it has been their author or their witness, their birth-place or their mirror. It is with it as with a seed endowed with inherent energy, which, deposited in man, "whether he sleep or wake, by night or by day, grows and spreads he knows not how;" a germ obscure indeed, without form or beauty,—a grain of dust which contains and compresses in its breast the tree with its mighty branches, and its wealth of foliage.

When we read that Jesus Christ is come to seek and to save that which was lost, we are given to understand that he is come to seek and to save not only all men, but also all man; consequently, all his faculties, all his aptitude,—the man of earth as well as of the skies; in other words, *humanity* as well as *man*.

If we wish to place man at the starting point of all correct ideas, in the way to all practical truths, it is well to lead him to embrace the Christian religion by the side that interests reason, a thing per-

haps too much neglected, and which would render this religion an instrument of intellectual development, no less than of moral culture, for the mass of society.

Christianity embraces the whole ; it shows the sovereignty of its principle, not in destroying anything whatever, but in assimilating all things. All becomes Christian for the Christian, nothing is absolutely outside of the domain of the gospel ; it has saved the whole of man, and the whole of life. Hence it is that when once Christianity rules life we enjoy a great liberty (and a little previous servitude is the apprenticeship to this liberty). Nothing is profane, with the one exception of sin ; life is not divided, there is no particular point where Christianity stops short ; you might as well try to prevent the atmospheres of two countries from blending above the mountains which form their frontiers. On the contrary, truth frees us from conventional distinctions or separations as from all others ; our liberty is proportioned to our submission, our latitude to our precision.

The price that Divine love has paid for our salvation avails, no doubt, to redeem or save our intellect, at the same time as our hearts ; but what was the aim of the Lord's messenger ? Did he come to expiate the errors of our judgment or the sins of our will ? Did he purpose to make of us sages or saints ? This single fact sufficiently establishes the truth I propound to you ; and which, even without it, I am bold

to say your conscience would establish. The glory of man is in the rectitude and right employment of his will, and the glory of the intellect is to subserve the triumph of the moral principle.

Everywhere, when Christianity introduces itself, civilized man draws nearer to nature, while the savage rises to civilisation ; they each advance a few steps in inverse directions towards a common centre, which is that of true sociality and true civilisation.

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINE.

I.—OF DOCTRINE IN GENERAL.

1. *Nature of Christian Doctrine.*

WHAT is a doctrine? An idea, or a system of ideas, that some grasp with mind and heart both, others only with the mind. The life of the first cannot fail to be modified by the doctrines they hold. Not so the last; these may bring forth other fruits than those their doctrine seemed to imply; nay, they may bring forth quite contrary ones.

The Christian religion, solely pre-occupied with the restoration of the human will, has only told of dogmas (or rather of the mysterious facts come to its knowledge), just what was strictly necessary for its purpose. Far from fully satisfying human curiosity, it has sent it empty away on several points; thus imposing upon it an exercise of submission, before or after many others of the same kind. This imperfection of a system, if it were a system, seems to me admirable in a religion, and communicates to ours a holy and austere character which is all its own. It is the character of all the dogmas clearly revealed in

the gospel to tend directly to practice. God, who has many other mysteries in his treasury, only wishes to reveal to us such as may do us good. Not one of the truths revealed by the gospel is passive and purely speculative ; all therein is for the use of man ; all calculated to renew and give him back to God.

A doctrine is always of less or more value than the man who professes it ; and the more perfect it is the more will its partisans, though superior to the rest of men, be inferior to it.

2. Province of Speculation.

I do not think it immaterial to lay down principles and to give to things their true names ; in no sphere does empiricism suffice ; and in matters of religion correct thinking is to holy living what the part is to the whole ; it is not less necessary to have the theory of the practice than the practice of the theory.

All great revivals have been served by science. The reformers were the learned men of their age ; the obscurists have never succeeded in any department.

3. Theology.

Theology is only a philosophy with a given basis, which does not, however, prevent there being in theology much of spontaneity, much sympathy with human nature, and even much correspondence with

all the various interests by which any epoch may be agitated. M. Lermnier has somewhere said, that philosophy is the movement of the human mind, and that religion are its pauses. We shall not apply this expression to the theology of the true religion. It is no pause in progress ; it is its rule and moderation ; it accepts the movement, and without checking directs it. It does not interrupt the course of thought, being a thought itself, and although its starting-point be revealed truth, and, consequently, its commencement is not at its own disposal, yet if it is true, it comprehends all because it is wider than all philosophies, and includes in itself what each of them has of truth. Without being eclectic by intention, it is in fact eclecticism *par excellence*, as the truth ought necessarily to be.

Theology is the formula of doctrines ; but doctrines, but truth, are all that the Bible contains, and all it teaches to a simple and submissive heart.

By nature science is autonomous as the conscience ; nay, this characteristic is so essential that it constitutes science what it is. Deprived of the spirit of investigation, of free inquiry, constrained to accept a symbol for starting-point, it is only a new priesthood, into which study is nothing but a mysterious initiation.

In all who have read the history of the Church, the word *exegesis*, so harmless in appearance, will waken sad thoughts and tragic memories. Where is there a really simple exegesis ? Where are candid

interpreters to be found ? If they abound anywhere, it is not in the domain where everything seems to reinforce the law of uprightness and to aggravate the evil of subtlety. Exegesis, gloss, sophistry, distortion : who is not tempted to believe these synonymous terms ? Nor are we speaking only of ill-constituted minds and double hearts ; it is just here that the best hearts and best minds have “stumbled and fallen.”

Theology suffers less, however, than any other science from imposed opinions and settled dogmas ; it is only in souls freed from the yoke of these that religious enthusiasm and apostolic zeal display themselves in a refreshing manner. Sometimes the mind that has been put in possession of a truth, but has not conquered it for itself, is eager to know it in a different manner ; and totally renouncing the second-hand opinions it had adopted, will, under the auspices of the spirit of light, create for itself a new conviction. The creed is the same as before, but prejudice has been changed into true faith, and knowledge into love. It is a yoke that has been laid down, not with a view to breaking, but to replacing it voluntarily with one's own hand. Sometimes this reaction of the mind on itself is not without a certain exaltation ; he who recovers his liberty enjoys it far more than he who has always possessed it.

Liberty, then, liberty of conscience. . . .

Were the doctrine to be exactly the same, the one difference of form, language, and method, would

suffice, by the inevitable process of comparison, to warn minds of their independence. Science with us will only make positive and rapid strides, when we place it under the auspices of that enlightened liberalism that should pass from our institutions into our morals.

Let the pupil shake off the swaddling-clothes of his mind, fashioned it may be of purely local prejudice, and let him rise to that liberty of thought without which there is neither true science nor true faith. . . . Talleyrand has said that nothing prepares so well for diplomacy as theology. In fact, the studies of the ministry are more general than all others; the study of theology is more *humanizing* than any other, even than that of social science.

II.—OBJECTIVE DOCTRINES.

1. *Doctrine of God.*

The instinct which demands a God is more imposing than the subtlety which repels him.

If we consider the ideas that the gospel has spread abroad in the world, besides that of regeneration, we shall number four :—

1st, *Monotheism*, already held by the Hebrews, which is the belief in a free and personal God; supreme intelligence which has created other intelligences; supreme liberty which has created free beings; and from whence all proceeds not by emanation but creation. · 2dly, The idea of a spiritual king-

dom. Jesus Christ gives himself to inaugurate a worship in spirit and truth. He speaks of this in opposition to idolatries and Hebrew worship, which rendered external rites obligatory. The Christian law claims directly only the obedience of the heart. The reign of Christ is all internal. It has liberty for its supreme law, and it is not of this world. This spiritual reign is not only a reign over the mind, but by the mind. Christ will not permit spirit to govern by matter; that is, to have matter governing. *3dly*, The next idea introduced into the world by Christianity, may seem at first sight a refutation of the preceding; it is that of the secularization of religion; it implies that religion is to realize itself not out of, but in the world. Christianity is as fully human as it is highly divine; it is earthly no less than heavenly; immediately applicable to the present age, and cast into the world like the rod of Moses into the bitter spring that it purified. *4thly*, Christianity has founded a Church, nay more, it presupposes one; it is not conceivable without a communion of spirit and action, for love must tend to action. The Church is not only a fruit, but an organ of Christianity; it propagates, upholds, and perpetuates it.

Man cannot be his own end, but neither is he the end of any creature. All things in the universe have their reason, the one in the other, according to the law of a progression, of which man is the last term. Man himself, to have any relation of the

kind, is forced to seek it in God. To seek it in himself would be to make himself his own God ; to seek it below God is unthinkable. No intermediate being can be the final end of man, whose nature overflows such a use, and whose most excellent faculties remain without a purpose so long as they have not God for their object.

If God be God, if man be man, the glory of God is the end of man. Man has been created to give glory to God ; he is the voice given to the world to praise God ; his lips, his life, his thought have no other use than to glorify God, all that he does in any other spirit is labour lost, movement without progress, so much taken from his life.

The object that we prefer to God is evidently God for us.

God, the source of all laws, the Law of laws, is himself subject to none. That, in the world of nature and of mind, to which we give the name of law, resolves itself, from the point of view of God's sovereignty, into simple means.

The Christian religion is not merely the knowledge of God, but the knowledge of man's relations with him.

Before teaching us what the will of God is, religion teaches us that God has a will, and that, properly speaking, nothing *happens*, but all is *done*.

Thought, persistently solicited, will never allow us a God out of whom anything can have its being ; a God who retires from his work after having created

it, and who, by the very fact of consenting to anything existing which is not himself, limits, subjects, mutilates, denies himself. The personality of God is inconceivable as his impersonality, and the human soul is at one here with the laws of thought ; it insists as strenuously upon this identification, this fusion with divinity, which alone can restore to it a God ; since a God distinct from his work, letting it exist according to the laws he has given it, and be consequently subject to those laws,—a God who does not incessantly blend with his work, create it continually, continually draw us out of nothing, who is not anew at each moment the reason of our being, the source of our life, such a God is neither for the reason nor the soul perfectly God.

Humanity requires for its God a personal God. An impersonal God is to humanity nothing, by the very reason ~~that~~ he is all. If he is the universe, if he is whatever is, ourselves included, then our relations cease in this fusion. An essential part of divinity, we lose our personality in him, as he loses his in absorbing us ; for personality supposes in its subject some circumscription or other, the limitation of one *me* by another. If none beside God can say *Me*, he himself cannot say it ; and, on the other hand, if God be not a *me*, no one is. In such a system, then, any relations between the Creator and the creature are metaphysically impossible. They are so, too, from another point of view : God being all that is, evil as well as good becomes an element

of his being, a part of his idea ; hence, in the fictitious individual called *man*, evil is as necessary, legitimate, and divine as good ; or rather, nothing is either evil or good except in a relative sense, I mean from the point of view of the human being. The distinction between good and evil, then, is no longer anything more than a temporary fiction ; an illusion born in our limited horizon, and destined to die there. Thus, under this softened expression, we see pantheism constitute itself a hopeless fatalism.

It is absolutely necessary, that in activity as in rest, you should not only support the idea of God, but that it should be welcome to you, that you should feel the need to blend it with everything ; that it should not disturb, but complete your life. If it were not so, God would not be to you what he ought to be, nor would you be to him what you ought ; in both cases your life would be mutilated, false, absurd,—an agitated and moving death under the name of life.

What is it to believe in the existence of a being ? Is it not to believe that there is a subject in which are combined certain qualities which distinguish it from all others ? Are not these qualities or these properties that which makes it what it is, and nothing else ?—and when, one after the other, we deny all these properties or qualities, does this not amount to denying the object itself ?

It is denying God to deny the properties essential to him ; it is denying the essential properties of

God to deny him the acts which are the necessary consequence of these properties. In other words, it is denying the perfections of God to deny him their exercise.

To know that a thing is, without knowing what it is, is very often to know nothing at all. Existence, separated from its mode, is only a word. And, according to the mode assigned to it, existence is something or is nothing. To believe in the existence of God without forming to one's-self any idea of the attributes of God, would be rather to believe in the word *God* than in God's existence. To believe in his existence and not in his personality, sovereignty, justice, decidedly is not to believe in him. To believe in his existence, and to hesitate as to his essential attributes, is to hesitate as to his very existence. In short, to believe in God, and to find one's-self incapable of drawing any practical inference from such a belief, is, if you will, to believe in God, but it is to be without him. In this sense you will perhaps be obliged to allow that belief in God, a firm, energetic, real belief, is not quite so common as is supposed.

God must have manifested himself to the soul from its origin or not at all; adoration must have been the first act of human thought; this movement that reflection slowly reproduces in the mind of fallen man must have been the first sign of our existence, our first greeting to life.

The idea of creating men in order to save them is

certainly somewhat more plausible than that of creating them to damn them ; but nevertheless it is hardly tenable. If it does not offend the heart it offends logic. A being is not created for the purpose of saving it.

Christian faith may indeed admit that there was in some part of the universe a first fall previous to the creation of man, but it does not find itself authorized by its documents to believe that man only took his place amidst created beings as the instrument, and not rather as the first and direct object of the great restoration.

2. *Incarnation and Redemption.*

We must either live without religion, without God, and without hope in the world, or receive the mystery of the Incarnation. There are not two kinds of religion, that in which God does not incarnate, but communicates himself from a distance, and the religion in which God does incarnate himself. The first are only the play of the imagination or the labour of thought, and, if we might venture to say so on this occasion, there is some one who is wiser than all the world, namely, all the world itself ; humanity has more intelligence than philosophers, it has profound instincts. This truth, that God must unite with man, and become man, in order that man should have a religion, should be able to adore and to hope, is implanted at the foun-

dation of human nature. So long as God does not incarnate himself, this desire will not be satisfied. Incarnation and religion are one and the same thing.

Without incarnation a religion is impossible. Philosophers and sages, you who appeal to reason, on this one point the human race will hear no reason; in all times, at the risk of setting reason aside, it has determined to know God under the form of man. It might happen that the first vestige of the religious instinct should fade from the human soul, that man should fall to the condition of an intelligent brute, a thinking organism, and thus be lower than the brute, in which, at least, all is harmony. This might be; but what we shall never see, given the continuance of the religious sentiment, is man conceiving religion under any other character than that of the incarnation, and satisfying himself with a religion which does not contain this idea.

The incarnation has its tragic side. It is from the first a death; for the Christ to be born into the life of man was already to die. In fact, this view is the sword by which every human soul, like the soul of Mary, is pierced through; the only sword whose sharp point can effect the ultimate divisions of soul and spirit, joints and marrow.

There is nothing but the love of God which can conquer the hardness of man's heart. He must believe that God loves, loves him, and he will only believe this by believing in an infinite love. So long

as he represents to himself any limit to divine love, man will fail to believe himself loved. He cannot believe without calculating, except in the uncalculating ; cannot be sure that the divine love reaches to the last extremities, unless God himself come down to the lowest depths of human misery. Such is the wretchedness and the hardness of man's heart, that only when the love of God has overpassed all barriers, when God has made himself man, will man at length believe himself dear to the heart of God. "The Word was made flesh" (John i. 14), our flesh : this is the groundwork of all religion that deserves its name.

We would not dare to affirm that the knowledge Adam had of God was inferior to ours, but nevertheless it is certain that God reserved in himself a manifestation destined for fallen man only ; and this manifestation it is that theologians call *incarnation*. Far be it from us to see under one only aspect a dogma which has as many sides as the sun has beams ; far from us the idea of making of it a necessity under the form of explaining it ; we would a thousand times rather exclaim, with our forehead in the dust, Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight !

We must, however, draw a distinction in the fact that occupies us. There are two facts in one, the pardon and its realization. As to the first, or the *will* to pardon, it will not surely be said that there was no room for pardon, for that would be to make sin a pure

misfortune, neither more nor less than a disease. And just as little should we say that God can neither pardon nor punish. God himself declared incapable of punishing and pardoning, would vanish away in the vague immensity of pantheism. For the personality of God is composed of the same elements as ours; if you deny this assertion, I defy you not to fall back into the impersonality of God. Now in the human personality you cannot suppress the ideas of law and love.

Pardon ignored is not a pardon; our misfortune is not to believe in it, which is a manner of ignoring. It is necessary then that pardon should be known. And here let us remark a singular instinct of man. He will not believe in the pardon so long as he does not see a victim; he demands an earnest of the intentions of God. If God be indeed willing to pardon, let him prove it; by allowing all his wrath to fall upon a Divine head, let him certify us that his anger is exhausted; let him give us a hostage; let a bloody rainbow rise upon the flood of our crimes. Humanity still says, with Thomas, "Except I put my finger in the marks of the nails I will not believe." This having been granted, it will henceforth believe in its pardon.

The dogma of redemption is essentially Christianity; it is therefore the efficient cause of all those individual or general changes attributable to Christianity.

3. *Expiation, its Importance—Manifestation of Justice and Love.*

Deprived of the great fact of expiation, and the whole train of ideas connected with it, what, I ask, is Christianity? For ordinary minds an ordinary morality; for others an abyss of inconsistencies.

If it were possible to expunge the Christian element, I mean the idea of redemption, from the teaching of the gospel; if it were possible that after this process there should remain of this teaching anything which had any inherent value, and deserved its name, I should still say what I have already said, "The cause is not proportionate to the effects; the effect must needs have had another cause;" and I should naturally ask myself whether indeed the dogma of redemption, such as it was represented in the Christian records, were not naturally adapted to produce those great results which no one thinks of denying, but for which they seek a cause?—a solemn and important question, before which one feels the need to recollect one's-self.

Everything in morality, and consequently every thing in civilisation, depends upon the answer returned to this question: Has man, in so far as he is a moral and responsible being, any need of a redemption, a ransom,—and has this ransom been offered, has it been paid? Is this question pronounced secondary? Then let us be shown a higher one, embracing any part of human nature uncomprehended by this first

question. It is no doubt possible to refuse to put it; but, once put, how prevent its including all human questions that science and conscience have for so many ages vied with each other in propounding?

The mystery of redemption is and will always remain a mystery, and the gospel announces but does not explain it.

This foolishness of the cross is not indeed itself explained, but it explains everything, and in default of other proof, how could that which explains every thing not be itself the truth?

Speaking honestly, do you suppose that the one in whose honour, and under whose worship, the world has changed its laws, morals, and spirit, and followed, for eighteen centuries, despite the obstacles placed in its path by the enemies and corrupters of this work, one invariable direction,—do you suppose that he was in the eyes of that world only the first of sages and the most virtuous of men? No; he was the Crucified, he was the Redeemer; it was before no lesser personage that eighteen centuries, one after the other, came to bow their head; and to emblazon on their standard, raise on their palaces, engrave on the seals of their republic the image of a disgraceful torture, it was necessary that he who had endured it should in their eyes be more than a devoted friend of man; he must needs have been a Redeemer, more than a martyr,—a God! Efface from the gospel, I do not say the cross, but the evangelical meaning of the

cross, you render these eighteen centuries absurd or impossible.

We ought not to be afraid of declaring that but for this the gospel would long ago have ceased to be talked of in the world, if indeed it ever had been much talked of; it is not so much the gospel that has preserved for us the doctrine of the cross, as this doctrine that has preserved the gospel.

If anything can bring home the need of an expiation, a redemption, it is most assuredly those ineffaceable and irreparable wrongs against whose remembrance we are powerless, and which will wring our heart so long as there is in us a heart to be wrung.

The need of expiation, which is that of humanity, and which for so many ages, and among so many nations, has made altars smoke and blood flow freely on the temple pavement, might seem to many persons either extinct or satisfied or worn out, if from time to time it did not give signs of life in certain individuals, and I maintain of a wondrously intense life too.

Murderers, who had the option of escaping death by means of an easy denial of facts, have been seen cheerfully to yield themselves up to it by their own confession; seen to sigh for the moment of their execution, as for a deliverance, and speed by their wishes the hour that was to shed their blood. Others more calm, but equally resolute, have been heard to declare themselves relieved and restored by the sentence of death; and, what is truly remarkable,

many of them did not base this feeling of theirs on any religious idea ; to many indeed, God was neither present nor known. The future remained for them completely veiled ; they were even indifferent to it ; which sufficiently shows that this sentiment was neither dictated nor suggested from without, that it was inherent and spontaneous, a property of their nature, not an opinion ; which amounts to saying that as nothing individual or accidental could explain its presence in their souls, it must have been a cry of nature, the manifestation of one of the native and universal properties of our moral organization ; that by their lips, in short, not any given men, but man in general, spoke ; not an individual, but humanity.

The whole or the majority of those who prompt this observation, were unlettered, rude men, limited to a very few ideas ; having never given thought much place in their existence ; men that we may call very little removed from a state of nature, meaning by nature those sentiments innate in all men, those views which common sense affords them, undisturbed by prejudice ; those impressions of which all are susceptible, provided nothing *adventitious* interpose between objects and their minds.

God, purposing to make the true love which is the foretaste and earnest of eternal life, bloom within our hearts, has begun by speaking to us of righteousness. He has awakened in our minds the idea of it, together with the sense of our own unrighteousness ; he has by the impenitence and threat of the law re-educated

our consciences ; has displayed in the unmerited and voluntary sufferings of his Son the inviolability of moral order ; it is as thoroughly penetrated with these ideas that we have been led towards pardon, which is itself, as pardon, a consecration of the law ; and it is at the foot of the very cross that teaches us justice, that we have learned what love ought to be, for is it not thence that the sacred words echo within our hearts, “The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they who live should not live unto themselves ?” Thus it is in the soil of justice that love has sprung up, and it is from this soil that it will eternally draw the sap which rises into its branches and covers them with blossom and fruit.

There is no merit in giving what we cannot withhold. Sacrifice on the part of man is only apparent and imaginary ; on the part of God pardon is real, but that is because the sacrifice is real also.

Nothing more calculated to act upon the will than the great fact of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The immensity of this fact contains for the heart a more powerful argument than do all the resources of human intellect.

It is the Christian alone who sees the justice, goodness, and providence of God manifest themselves in all their fulness, and develop in perfect harmony. In Jesus Christ they are complete, real, triumphant. In him divine justice has been satisfied, by him the

goodness of God proclaimed, by him the government of the Holy Spirit, moral providence, have been raised above doubt. These truths are all the substance and all the object of the Bible. The Christian alone knows, alone has a God.

We love truly only what we esteem ; we should not be able truly to love a God whom we did not reverence ; and God could no longer be the object of our reverence if he had sacrificed to his purpose of saving us the least iota of that holy law which Christ himself came not to abolish but to fulfil, and which is to remain intact and inviolable throughout eternity.

True love, deep affection, moral sentiment, can exist only under the shelter of conscience, and in close connexion with it,—can only dwell in the heart of those for whom love is a part of justice, and justice an element of love ; of those who while very far, doubtless, from loving only and duly because they *ought* to love, yet know and confess that they *ought* to do so ; in a word, those for whom love is at once the supreme duty and supreme happiness. Take away earnestness, and the ballast of moral convictions from love, nothing remains but a fluctuating and frivolous sensibility. Take away duty, temperament only is left.

It is necessary to know that the Saviour-God is at the same time perfectly holy ; that holiness is alike his end and means ; that it is by holiness that he leads to happiness ; that holiness and salvation are inseparable. This is essential, in order that the

work of an immense love should not be fruitless to man and unworthy of God. This is the perfection of the gospel as a system ; and it is by virtue of this system that we are replaced in possession of an infallible and constant criterion of good morals.

Whatever the language we make use of, we must always declare that we cannot represent to ourselves God in the same disposition when he gives his Son to the world, and when he distributes his other graces, temporal or spiritual, to his creatures.

Justice is something apart and *per se*, and although it can only be satisfied by love, yet it is not love.

Love is not the beginning of the law ; justice is its first word. Justice has a reality and substance independently of love ; and there would be not only error, but danger in forgetting this.

Justice is to love what the trunk is to the root. We can conceive a tree without a top, or, at all events, with an undeveloped top ; we cannot conceive a top without a trunk. The soul, before it is fertilized by the dew of grace, may stop short at the idea of justice, and pant without joy beneath the spur of the law, but the soul which has risen as high as love, very far from denying justice and duty, only clings to and delights in them the more.

Do not put love before justice, or hasten to submerge the latter in the former. Recognise distinctly that whether you love or love not, the commandment is just, and that charity, which is the end of the law, is not its commencement.

This double and simultaneous manifestation takes place on the cross : the only point of intersection for two attributes, two acts which seemed as though they could never meet ; a new Sinai whence is promulgated a new law ; the east, from whence rises the Sun of Righteousness, which together with *righteousness* bears *healing* in its rays ; a holy altar where the law is satisfied, satiated, so to speak, by the sufferings of the just, and becomes at length silent before that blood which takes voice and speaks better things than that of Abel.

III.—SUBJECTIVE DOCTRINES.

1. *Salvation and Grace.*

(1.) Importance of this Doctrine.

Salvation is not an external, material fact ; salvation is not without, but within us ; it is a work whose true sphere is our heart. Salvation is a state of the soul, and consequently every work of grace to which our soul remains a stranger cannot be the work of our salvation.

To render us like to God, to restore his image in us, is the whole work of the gospel, is the very work of salvation ; and that work begins in the child of God from the moment that this title is accorded him.

The desire of salvation and the fear of hell are two different things. There is nothing noble in the latter of these sentiments, whereas the whole nobility of the human soul may find scope for itself in the first.

The gospel acknowledges nothing to be irreparable, and it alone dares to contradict the terrible saying—

“ To hinder that which was from having been,
Passes the might of the Divinity.”

What mercy annihilates has never been. God, in the infallible power of his Spirit, can make us date from whence he pleases. He separates from us our former selves ; creates a new man, to whom the old is a stranger. In his sight there is no ineffaceable sin, no impossible restitution, no time irrecoverably wasted ; no destruction, no death of any kind ; the past swallows nothing up ; all that God takes under his keeping is eternal as himself ; our thirst, while ceaselessly drawing thence, can never dry up his inexhaustible riches ; we can only perish by failing to draw from them, and we shall only do this by failing to believe in them.

All the world wants to be happy, no one to be saved.

Generally speaking, it is important for every Christian, and every man, to have a thorough understanding of the part of theology that treats of grace and faith. Let what is impenetrable remain so, but let us understand well whatever is made to be understood. Let us beware of getting hold of mere idle words in lieu of ideas.

I do not, I confess, know what can interest philosophers, if the proclamation of the doctrine of salvation by grace, surrounded by its rich corollaries, fail

to do so. Do they not perceive that, philosophically speaking, it is the most exquisite of conceptions? Outside of this doctrine, morality has only the alternative of two principles,—the chimera of pure love, and the degradation of mercenary obedience; unsustainable principles, both incapable of lending support to the whole life of man, and of enclosing all his nature. What of truth there is in both these principles (for there is no likelihood of man being able to invent a complete error) we shall find safe and sound in the doctrine of salvation by grace, in which these two extreme positions mutually correct and complete each other, and disappear in the unity that absorbs them: obedience and love, law and liberty, finding their reconciliation, and moral philosophy the only firm basis it can possibly have; in a word, the problem of *practical reason* being solved once for all. It is solved by facts as well as by speculation, because facts show us in the real Christian the real alliance of hitherto unrelated elements,—interest, duty, and love.

The religion of grace is not one particular religion, but religion itself, and other religions only differ from it in not being religions at all. With the exception of the true, all religions have been only contrivances to avoid religion. It is *grace* that in other systems man has tried to elude, to *turn*, if I may so speak; grace, that is, in the integrity of the complex idea I have defined according to the gospel; grace that instructs, constrains,

binds man to the law, and offers him up to God as a living and happy sacrifice.

This is why society can only be religious inasmuch and in as far as its worship is a homage to the doctrine of grace, and can only have for correct morality that which flows from the principle of grace.

Grace is not the means of our salvation, it is its principle, source, reason, cause. Our salvation entirely proceeds from grace, or the merciful will of the Father of spirits, just as the bird comes wholly out of the egg, the fruit wholly out of the branch, although heat have been needed to hatch the egg and the hand to gather the fruit. Grace, then, is the cause, the source of salvation, faith is but the means; or, if you prefer it, there are two graces: one accomplished without us, which the apostle calls simply *grace*; and another accomplished in us, to which he gives the name of *faith*. In principle, grace is one, but it has different moments, different localities, different forms. There are many gifts, but all is gift; grace without, grace within us—this is the gospel.

It is true that for those who do not know their state, the message of grace includes a message of condemnation; but the second is absorbed in the first; and we only learn that we were lost, in learning that we are saved. There is no interval between these two truths, and the bitterness of the one only serves to enhance the sweetness of the other.

We cannot exaggerate, on the contrary, we must always fallshort of the truth in describing that spring-time of grace which the gospel causes to blossom forth in a renovated soul. There is no element of our being but what is renewed. With a new soul, we acquire other eyes, other senses ; nature takes a different aspect, and tells us things she had never told before.

The doctrine of grace not only introduces quite new elements into religious life and thought, but it transforms and transfigures what the gospel may have in common with other religions or philosophical systems ; it ranges under familiar names ideas and facts hitherto unknown. It alternately creates and vivifies, which is also creating.

In the moral world, the force of God—a thing inconceivable—composes itself of our forces, in the same way that the work of his providence is very often the sum of our actions. If you decompose into visible elements the power displayed by Christianity, you will only find a human force at the end of your analysis. All that God operates in this order ; he operates by us, but it is he who evokes and determines our will ; it is he who pervades and coordinates the elements that our nature offers him. We only give him what he has given us ; he is, in a word, the force of our forces, and consequently he is all ; our life is his life, and we are still him.

(2.) Salvation the Work of God and Man.

A generous life can only have a generous principle, and whoever believes himself to be in part the author of his own salvation will soon come to think himself its chief, and finally its only author. There is no resisting the incline. Jesus Christ will but appear as a subordinate, and his sufferings will be nothing more than a reserve fund, to which we shall only apply under pressure to make up certain deficiencies that we cannot help seeing, and others that may have escaped us ; and thenceforth, or rather from the very first step taken in this direction, do we not fall under the fatal influence of an idea, which, making us the cause or means of our own salvation, diverts our gratitude from its true object, and renders impossible that impulse of disinterested love which is the only life of the soul ?

The whole work of *salvation*, from its origin to its consummation, belongs to God. Let us start from this. But salvation, this work of God, has two distinct parts: the one objective,—pardon under form of redemption, the paternal arms reopened, our finding ourselves without any participation of ours at once purified from our former sins (2 Pet. i. 9), the opening out to us of a new career, in which we walk under the constant shelter of the divine pardon, always active and inexhaustible as the merit of Jesus Christ ; the other part is subjective,—it is faith that, try as I will to reduce it to its most simple

notion, is not the less subjective ; it is still *I* that believe, although it is God that gives me to believe. This faith, producing joy and love, unites me indissolubly to God, and crowns the work of my salvation, which can only be consummated in so far as I am united to God, or, in other words, that it is no longer I who live, but Christ that lives in me. Therefore there is in my salvation something of myself ; God has taken something of mine in order to save me, has employed me for my own salvation. We cannot withstand this conclusion in any system, if we mean to abide in the terms of the Saviour's declaration : " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that *whosoever believeth on him* should not perish, but have eternal life." It is not then I who am to save myself in any way or measure, but I am not to be saved without my own concurrence.

Under the name of grace, then, it is Jesus Christ alone, and Jesus Christ entirely, that we propose as the object of faith, and not only the God but the man ; not only his death but his life, not only his doctrine but his example, not only his sacrifice but his glory ; for it is by all these combined, without exception or diminution, that Jesus Christ is our Saviour. But because pardon is at the head of this work, because the whole of it is but the development of pardon, because it is under the aspect and name of pardon that this one and indivisible work presents itself to our gaze, because pardon is the

sap which spreads in all the branches of this mighty tree, the sweetness diffused throughout the minutest crumbs of the bread of life,—we were correct in saying, and we repeat it, that pardon, with all its consequences, all its developments, is the object of Christian faith. This is not to turn our eyes from Jesus Christ, who guarantees us pardon, himself confers it upon us (Matt. ix. 6), and consummates it.

This revelation must needs be a moral fact, in conformity with the nature of the being for whom it is destined. It would be a magical fact if there were in any respect a solution of continuity between the new man and the old. Human life is not cut in two by a thunder-stroke. If we have to refer everything in this rehabilitation to the divine liberty, still its whole work must have a moral character, that is to say, it will bring into play all the moral forces of man. This supposes that they exist, and that they can be employed. Now these moral forces are summed up in freedom. The divine freedom awakes the human.

The advantage possessed by the new man is not exactly the receiving a new soul. It is not with an absolutely new soul that he loves what he loved not before. New in one sense it doubtless is, but in what sense? In that its affections have taken a new direction; in that order has re-established itself in his ideas; in that he has set his heart where his true treasure lies. He loves, he desires other objects indeed, but love is still love, desire, still desire; the affections of the Spirit and the affections of the world

have two contrary objects, but that is all the difference between them. Conversion is the movement which turns the soul from one side to the other, from the dark and gloomy west towards the east, from which light breaks forth. The work of God in conversion is not absolutely to render our soul susceptible of attachment—that it always was,—but to cause it to love what it ought to love. But it is very true, that by proposing to our love an object which is at once sovereign perfection and sovereign happiness, it precipitates our whole soul towards it. In presence of God once manifested, once known, there is no more room for hesitation or division; the love of God in that respect can resemble no other; and all the forces of the soul, all its rays, so to speak, converge in one only direction; it seems that the soul has only then begun to live and love; it seems as though it were actually a new soul. This, however, is not the case; but it is a soul that has recovered its lost way,—a regulated soul; one that concentrates on its true object the forces it dispersed on a thousand; an awakened soul, born to a new life, which is that of the Spirit.

Far from having for final end to effect an internal schism in our being, religion does not even propose to achieve the schism already begun; it aims at bringing into notice this disruption already made, only to replace it by a true, an irrevocable unity. There are two men within us; we feel this naturally; religion makes us feel it more keenly, constrains us to con-

fess it, but this only to prepare the way for that new man whose presence is at length to make us acquainted with the profound joy of unity. Now repentance, which is the principal spring of religion—*religion* being *reparation*—can only fulfil the object religion has in view, by uniting us to ourselves, not separating us from ourselves.

We must not ignore the fact, but rather proclaim with admiration, that never has the sentiment of moral liberty, individual responsibility, and religious personality, been so lively and powerful as since the promulgation of that gospel we may sum up in so few words, “salvation, of grace, through faith.”

The object of religion is indeed to create within us a new man, but not an artificial; religion is not the destruction, but the triumph of our nature; it is our present state that is far from reason and truth, it is by the love of God and of his law that we re-enter into order, consequently into ease and peace. It is only then that all dislocation is at an end, and we feel that everything has taken its proper place in our being, and we ours in life and society; so that the expression, *natural man*, which the poverty of language has obliged us to apply exclusively to unregenerate man, is really the true, the distinctive name of the new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness.

A serious and devoted life cannot have insipidity and apathy for its basis. We cannot annihilate ourselves, and dilate and grow from one and the same

cause. The new creature does not disobey, but confiscates to its use all the forces of the old man, and this is why, in every life whose uniformity is due to the energy of the will, there is at least one tragical moment, and consequently there is poetry; for the truly good is always beautiful; the worthy and the sublime are only one. Where, then, if not here, should poetry be found?

(3.) Grace and Law.

There is no truth which may not be abused, and that of the necessity of propping our weakness by divine power, might be carried in some to the negation of our own resources and natural faculties, to their negation and relinquishment, and, finally, to an enervating quietism. It is well that from time to time our indolence should be aroused, and our conscience admonished, by meeting with stoicism in principle and practice; so that, seeing what the will, however infirm, can accomplish unaided, men may learn what ought to be done by the will succoured from above. We must exercise our strength, were it only to know its limits. It is to be feared that those who have not made this experience will never make any other.

Between quietism and the doctrine of grace there is a wide abyss. The idea of the former is the annihilation of personality, or its absorption in God; the idea of the gospel of grace is on one side gratuitous pardon, which in no way compromises the

human personality; and on the other, the grace of faith, which is no other thing than God himself, speaking with an all-powerful eloquence to the heart of man; for grace, in this point of view, is but an eloquence entirely divine. Now this idea spares, respects, nay, necessarily supposes personality, and more, it enhances the consciousness of it.

Grace is a Spirit speaking to a spirit; it is the consecration and triumph of two personalities at once. Hence observe its effects; nowhere is the sentiment of responsibility and human freedom more keen than in the adherents of grace, and nowhere have these men encountered a more decided antipathy than in the adepts of quietism. There are exceptions to this last fact, but they prove the rule; and if we do not maintain that there is sympathy between the Quietists and the partisans of the theology of the Jesuits, we may at least pronounce an approximation between them to be easy, to take place frequently, and something more than an accidental similarity of letters to exist between Molinism and Molinosism.

The logic of the flesh may indeed say, "Let us sin, since grace abounds;" but the Spirit teaches the human heart another logic, nor has any one ever believed it christian to follow that of the flesh. True Christians hope all from grace, and confess this; but they work as though they expected all from themselves.

The Christian, happy in his dependence on mercy,

is only the more eager to do all in order to dispense with it henceforth ; if he has no hope of doing this, he acts as if he had ; the more that has been forgiven him, the less he consents to levy new tributes on that love that forgave ; he will not turn the grace of God into licentiousness ; he will not sin that grace may abound ; rather the more grace abounds the less will he sin, and the benefits of God will but tighten the more the bonds that attach him to his duty.

Woe to him who, pardoning himself as easily as God pardons him, does not re-engrave his sins in his heart in proportion as God effaces them from his book, and remember them in proportion as God forgets them ! Pardon is not for that man.

With all your arguments drawn from natural history and astronomy, you will only teach man what he knows without you ; you will only make him will what he wills beforehand, and do what he does already. No fundamental change can result from the employment of such means. It is necessary to furnish man with a new point of view, and this is the property of Christianity alone. The conviction of sin and of a fallen nature ; the discovery of the absolute inviolability of the law ; the generous offer of a free and unconditional salvation ; God himself paying by the life and death of Christ : unlooked-for deliverance,—all these facts falling at once into the soul, mutually strengthening, serving as complement, verification, and counterpoise to each other ; creating in man not merely

a new system but a new moral sense,—overthrow at once all his former hopes and fears, and, in the midst of a sublime tempest, let fall into his heart the imperishable seed of a new life. With this new life there springs up in his heart what St. James admirably designates as the “law of liberty,” or “the perfect law.” This is a law presented by grace, sanctioned by pardon, fortified by hope, accepted by gratitude, accomplished by love, and incessantly ratified by the inexhaustible joy of reconciliation: a law triumphing in liberty; a law at once more inflexible and more mild; more exacting and more easy; more imperious and more benign; more divine and more human, than that of which we read the half-effaced, yet awful lines, in our consciences before. Can we doubt whether this perfect law will be found perfect in every particular; or whether, being the law of liberty, it will not be by that very fact, and pre-eminently, the law of activity? It impels to action, and does so without cessation; Christian obedience sets its goal further than any other; it recognises no limits save that of possibility, and nowhere finds it. Because it feels itself insolvent, it always pays; having nothing to give, it gives itself; and whatever loans it levies on self, it invariably satisfies or replaces by love. Every Christian is a Cæsar, believing to have done nothing, so long as anything remains to him to do. A holy and inexhaustible activity is the character and the privilege of living Christianity.

Far from law and grace being irreconcilable, the one conducts necessarily to the other; I mean that law leads to grace, and that grace in its turn leads back to law.

Jesus Christ is both the most absolute grace and the most perfect law; so that to believe in him is to embrace at once both grace and law.

Law must triumph even in grace, and no man will be happy at the expense of order. God may pardon, but be sure that he will only do so while at the same time sanctifying.

The law will eternally remain law, as truth will eternally remain truth; the law is more sacred for the Christian than any other; its accomplishment is the necessary exercise of faith, which develops and perfects itself in proportion to the works that manifest it.

Law is one half of religious truth, and we may well hope that one who should pay a serious homage to law would not stop there, but rise, sooner or later, to the Lawgiver.

If Jesus Christ speaks in his own name, he has evidently no right to alter or abolish the law; and if he comes from God, it is impossible that he should do so, for that would be to abolish God himself. The law is necessary between God and the creature; it is essential to our moral nature; our conscience telling us all that we have duties, and are made to obey. The law is as eternal as our relations with God, and as God himself; it is

truth in the moral order of things, and how can truth be abolished?

The law will seem to us perfect long before it seems agreeable; and perhaps it will never seem as agreeable as it does perfect.

We may, and indeed we ought, to lay equal stress upon the principle of duty and that of grace; to impose upon ourselves the whole weight of the perfect law, and expect the strength to fulfil it from God alone.

The grace bestowed on us is that of ever-advancing; grace is the being more and more rooted in faith, and feeling the bond between us and God ever more close and indissoluble, it is the certainty that the work of God in us will never be interrupted; that the *light* in our *path* will *shine more and more unto the perfect day*; it is to have an increasingly clear idea of perfection, and to make it an ever dearer end; to see a whole eternity opened to our progress; to breathe beforehand, like a perfume from heaven, that liberty which we shall enjoy in a better world, when, all obstacles being removed, all temptations over, all chains broken, we shall at length be all that we desire, and all that a creature can be.

The true Christian obeys because he loves; he loves because he is loved.

Grace, pardon, then, is the gospel's first word, obedience its last; or, since God pardons because he loves, and man obeys because he loves, we may say

that it is love that is both the first and the last word of our religion.

But what is first should remain first. God must be named before man ; the benefit before the gratitude.

The Christian, the new man, may be compared to the magnetized needle, which may in certain latitudes, or in the vicinity of high mountains, offer some deviations to the eye, but the direction of which is not the less reputed constant, and which, ever trembling on its pivot, nevertheless ever points to the pole. The permanent action of earth and of the flesh may indeed be experienced by the internal compass that the Christian carries with him, but any one who would attempt to make it point west instead of north, and to fix it in that direction, would never succeed. It is in this sense that one is a Christian ; in this sense that we are called to see the Lord.

It would ill become the disciple of the gospel to see nothing in that gospel but St. Paul, and to accept in St. Paul that alone which distinguishes him from his fellow-workers, and not that which he has in common with them. In point of fact, the whole of St. John may be found in St. Paul, but how many readers, even among the simple, seem to have no idea of this ?

I might repeat it for ever ; every truth of which man is the subject has two poles, and is truth only at that price. In every truth of this order, two elements, which are contrary merely in appearance,

complete and sustain each other. In other words, moral, and therefore religious truth, is at once simple and complex, and life, which is only truth realized, has for condition this simplicity and this complexity. Every living Christian, whether he be numbered amongst the simple or the sage, combines within himself these two elements, or, if you will, these two contraries, and, indeed, he is only a living Christian because, thanks to the action of divine grace, he does so reconcile them. Here pure science fails, dialectics object; it is more natural to them to divide than to unite. We may add, that to divide is in every respect more easy, convenient, and clear. But in these matters unity does not consist in arbitrarily suppressing one of the terms of the problem, but in acknowledging both and fusing them. Cutting the knot will not do; it must be disentangled without being torn. This is what all sects overlook, and we are all more or less sectarian. But the Spirit of God is not so, and when it comes and touches our heart, it raises us, in spite of our dialectics, and whatever our *opinions*, above sectarianism.

2. *Faith.*

(1.) Its Definition.

Faith consists in believing, and believing is to hold a thing true and certain.

This, however, is only the beginning, the minimum; as it were the A B C of faith. We cannot

dispense with it, any more than the farmer with land in which to sow his crops ; nevertheless, if we remain there, not only will it be of no advantage to us but perhaps it would have been better for us not to have believed at all. If pure and simple belief, that is to say, the mere certainty that one thing is and another is not, rightly passes as an advantage, it is because the view that it affords us of certain objects, namely, of God, his glory, his promises, disposes us to obedience ; but before the obedience of the hands there must be that of the heart.

Faith is the mysterious insertion which grafts us into the vine, which is Christ, from whom, in virtue of our union, we henceforth derive all our sap, and whose life is ours. To know this is to comprehend how faith saves.

The first of the graces of the new covenant is faith. The special character of faith is to attach itself before all and after all to what God says. To believe is to repose entirely on the infallibility and fidelity of God, it is to place above all certainty, all guarantees, those that spring from his testimony, to hold each word of his mouth more substantial and real than reality itself ; it is in practice to look upon duty laid down by God as more evident and mighty than all besides ; consequently it is to go forward, eyes closed, to meet events as if to meet God ; it is not to ask to see, but to consider sight either as the actual reward of faith, or as a merciful relief that God may, when it seems him good, grant

to our weakness ; it is, in a still more general sense, to live in the spirit, which is the best part of our nature ; to escape from the tyranny of the senses ; to attach ourselves to the foundation of all things ; to the very essence of truth, not to signs or external accidents ; to prefer the unseen, which is eternal, to the seen, which is temporary, and the possession of the supreme good to the sensible marks of its presence ; finally, as to what more particularly concerns Jesus Christ, it is to bless God that the Word was made flesh, and that eternal wisdom has conversed with the children of men ; but not to think of Christ, although he be perfect man, as of another individual whose presence is indissolubly united to the body he wears, or as though he were less present, less near, and less united to us because our eyes no longer see him.

Faith is the genius of the heart.

Human nature will believe. Whoever seeks to divert it from this tendency throws it back, in fact, on the side of authority, and that in a more extended sense than is supposed.

Faith has in all times been the strength of the weak and the comfort of the unhappy.

Faith ennobles all servitudes ; changes them into liberty ; faith is liberty in servitude.

We are not ennobled by what we see or what we are, but by what we believe. Our dignity consists in our faith. Without moral conviction,—dependent not upon experience, but upon themselves,—man is a degraded being.

Faith is in a certain measure the common property of the human species, and in a higher measure the particular dowry of the highest characters, and the noblest minds ; the source, in short, of all that bears the stamp of greatness in the world.

Human religions, and the religion of Jesus Christ, are, with regard to this principle of faith, all philosophically correct, with this difference, that in the first there is only a weak and useless commencement of faith, and that in the religion of Jesus Christ alone, truth is found in all its plenitude and all its energy.

Although knowledge and faith are alike, in so far as the former is comprised in the latter, it is yet important to distinguish between them. All knowledge is not saving ; we might even say that it is never knowledge that saves, but faith, and that in order to effect our salvation knowledge must become faith. Two things are necessary,—knowledge itself, and a certain manner of knowing.

No doubt, where we know not what we ought to believe, we can have no peace, because it is in the truths that are the object of faith that the principle of peace is found ; but it does not follow that when we know what we are to believe, and even when we do believe it, that for that reason alone we have peace. The peace proclaimed by angels on the solemn night when Immanuel was given us, was doubtless something better than the repose of reason from the oscillations of doubt.

Faith does not consist in believing ourselves to

be saved, but in believing that we are loved,—that we have received, without having done anything whatever to deserve it, the pardon of our transgressions ; and that nothing shall separate us from the love of God. It consists, when it has reached its plenitude, in believing that God will certainly save us, but not in believing that we are at this moment saved, for St. Paul declares that we are “ saved by hope.”

It was necessary that free-will should concur in repairing the evils it had made ; hence the necessity of founding religion, not upon *sight*, which excludes all application of free-will, but upon the faith which demands its extensive use.

To believe without seeing is not only to hold a fact that we have not witnessed to be true, but also, and above all, to acquiesce in a principle, in virtue of the testimony rendered to it by our conscience, and independently of all other considerations. It is in this that true and saving faith properly consists.

To believe the truth, and to act according to the truth one believes, is the whole of man, the whole of life, and it is also salvation.

Even here on earth sight is the ideal character of faith ; whatever falls below this, is not, strictly speaking, faith ; the faith which is not sight is a chimera, and in a moral and spiritual sense we must see, touch, and taste in order to believe. Faith is, according to the expression of St. Paul, the lively

representation, or, to give the whole force of his language, the *substance* of what we hope for. The gospel is only a truth for us when it is a reality, when, awakening in us dormant powers, filling up conscious deficiencies, completing a thousand data, resolving a thousand enigmas, it gives at last a meaning to our existence.

Every thought is exclusive in that it is a thought. It cannot affirm one thing without denying another. It is only a thought inasmuch as it defines to itself its object. It is therefore, like matter, endowed with impenetrability. One thought which allows itself to be penetrated by another is no true thought. A system which receives all systems favourably is not one itself, but rather, whatever the appearance it puts on and the claims it urges, a negation of all system. A religion which does not deduce its character from its object, but its object from its character, cannot pretend to the name of religion. Involuntary impressions, an involuntary state of the soul, point out no distinct object, and may be produced by objects the most different. The unknown and obscure object of these various emotions may take such or such a given name, but the name does not make the object. Under the undefined name of God, it is perhaps in the universe that I believe, in my sensations, in myself. Everything reduces itself to shadows, to mere appearances, in this religious syncretism. There, where everything is symbol, where the object always escapes, the object itself becomes

a symbol, and God is only another name for the universe. And, moreover, while defining nothing, and consequently allowing everything, one does not fail to exclude; one excludes by this very manner of allowing, for positive doctrines will not be treated thus; they consent, indeed, to be denied, but not to be reduced to the value of pure forms; it is the very politeness shown them that wounds, and this species of intellectual toleration accorded them offends them more than enmity.

Truth ought to be loved for itself, and in order to judge of it correctly we must separate it from habit. Nay, more, a truth may become an error when, being consecrated by habit, it opposes other truths, or when, being only relative, it claims to be absolute. Habit is wrong too, when it erects into immutable rites forms that certain places and certain times may have required, but which other times, other places not only require no longer, but even reject. Shall I venture to say it—yet wherefore should I not?—absolute truth itself, or, if you will, faith, considered in its object, should never become a pure habit; it would grow old and die within us, if it were not every day and every hour born there anew. Nothing can last in this world except on the condition of its renewing itself.

(2.) Its Phases

To believe is not a state in which we place ourselves once for all in accepting the proof of religious

truths ; to believe is an action, an action of the soul, ever accepting anew what it has before believed, and incessantly reuniting itself to it. If it be thus, and if it be true that one cannot believe without looking, is it not clear that, dating from conversion, which has had a look for its origin, we must look without ceasing? Some will perhaps say, We must not incessantly look, but reflect incessantly on what we have once seen. Certainly we do not mean to exclude thought, and necessarily there is much of it in that looking that we recommend ; but nevertheless we should not be satisfied unless the thought came from the look or led to it. After all, the object of Christianity is not an abstract truth ; it is a fact, a person, it is Jesus Christ, and him crucified. This fact, this person, offers himself naturally to the glance before the thought ; and that which acts upon our soul in the happy sense intended by God, is this object itself. We do not believe in Christianity, we believe in Jesus Christ. Whatever Christian action there is in the world, is the work, not of Christianity, which is itself only an effect, but of Jesus Christ. The relations in which we stand as Christians are not intellectual, not relations between our minds and a truth, but relations of one person with another person, relations of us men with Jesus Christ, God and man. The object of our faith is invisible, but not impersonal ; he is not to be seen with the bodily eye, but nevertheless he is to be seen ; and we do not converse with him as with an idea, that is to say,

in reality, as with ourselves, but as with a being who is with us always, even to the end of the world.

The measure of faith is for each one of us the measure of peace, charity, liberty, life.

It is only gradually that we become assured that we believe earnestly; it is gradually that faith, like the embryo, takes form, defines its features, and characterizes itself as faith. It is by action, by life, that it attains to this, and life and action imply precepts and occasions of conformity with them.

Faith is not an equal thing at all times, and in all people, a thing in which there can neither be less nor more, a thing which by its nature must be at once indivisible and infinite. No; a person may have faith, Christian faith, and yet there may be something lacking to his faith.

(3.) Objective and Subjective; Authority.

Subjective faith, as it is called in the schools, has been exalted above *objective*, by insinuating that the point of importance is to believe firmly, whatever the object of faith may be. No doubt it was only intended to apply this maxim to shades of truth, not to truth itself; but how easy the passage from the one to the other!

The character of faith is not all in all without the object of faith; it is to its object that it owes its character. It is not in proportion to the amount, but the nature of our faith, that we become all we can and ought to be. The faith that exalts us to

the proper end of our existence, is that which strips us of self and clothes us with God ; that which places us at the disposal of God, leads us to look to him for everything ; annihilates in us the idea that we have any right whatever to exercise against God (for it is into these terms that we may translate the prepossessions of self-righteousness) ; in a word, it is the faith which does not reckon with God, recognises itself as insolvent, and finds that love alone is worthy to correspond with love. This is faith in the gospel, in Jesus Christ.

To believe in Christ is to believe that he has been sent to us, given to us ; to believe that the supreme object of the Father's dilection—whose name of Son alone worthily expresses his nature, perfections, and glory—embracing the whole human race in an immense love, has put on our mortal flesh to be the repairer of our wretchedness, our representative, surety, and intercessor. By a painful supposition try to abstract Jesus Christ, with his power of mercy and his title of Saviour, from the world, and so to replace humanity where he found it, in presence of an unknown God, of the God of Sinai, wrapped in a darkness that is only lit up at intervals by the dread flash of the lightning ; or in presence of that God of philosophy,—force without personality, unconditioned essence, gulf of existence, terror of the imagination or the heart ; or finally, in presence of two closed doors, the one that of hell, the other of annihilation : yes, replace humanity where Christ found it, and

then say to that humanity, Love God, provided there be a God ; love him,' provided he be just, provided he love you. From the depths of those quivering hearts you would hear gush a thousand cries, various, but all alike incessantly repressed by fear. Yes ; God loves us ; but how if he did not love us ? Yes, God is just, but if he be just he is formidable, and how love him ? If he be unjust he is not admirable, and again how love him ? God exists, that is clearer than the light of the sun ; God is good because he is God ; but if he be God, he is holy ; what have I to conclude thence?—what have I to hope for myself ? What does he will, what has he resolved ? Can I love him simply because he is loveable ? Can I love him if he does not love me, if peradventure he hates ? Can I love in such an uncertainty as this ? and is it not necessary, in order that I should “run in the way of God’s commandments,” that God himself should “set my heart at liberty ?”

We may observe around us two kinds of religious belief, the one an affair of authority, tradition, and habit ; the other of immediate conviction and experience ; and sometimes the first or the second is seen existing alone in an individual, sometimes these two sources of belief combine and blend.

The faith of authority is the belief we place in certain facts on the testimony of persons we believe to be sincere and well-informed. There is in this nothing of itself unreasonable ; on the contrary, it would be unreasonable to refuse to make use of

this means of instruction, such a pretension carried to the utmost would paralyse the whole of human life.

The faith of authority rests on two bases which ought to make it honourable in our eyes: faith in intelligence, and faith in morality.

We acknowledge that every beginning is good in God's hands; that passive faith may become active, servile faith, free; but until this change be effected, we contend that it is not at all events a living faith, and that, just as faith without works is dead, so a faith which is not a work is dead also.

One thing is certain, belief, unless joined to the consent of the heart and the will, is simply belief and in no way faith; it is certain that such consent is the essential, the chief point of faith, so that if any one, excluded from the knowledge of Jesus Christ, had felt the need of a Saviour, had desired, and, so to speak, eventually accepted him, he would have come within the conditions of true faith, and would have reaped its advantages. Thus a distinct belief in the mystery of godliness might, in so far as it was only belief, remain without effect upon its possessor; while the disposition of the heart to receive Jesus Christ who was unknown, would have the character and the value of true faith, would be a work, which the former was not.

Whether you believe in religion because your fathers have believed in it, because those around you do so, because it is the charter of your country,

because the budget holds it (poor proofs these no doubt); or whether you believe in it because learning has unfolded for you proofs of the authenticity of the Scriptures, or because the Church in which you are born appears to you to flow in an uninterrupted stream from the foot of the cross, and constantly to bring you waters from the source itself, under each and all of these suppositions I still say, that if such faith on your part be not a preparation for one more personal, if your conviction gains no other basis, if you do not end by believing on internal evidence what you began by accepting on external, you are still, although with the most legitimate, firm, and in some respects efficacious conviction, outside the conditions of true faith.

There is in what we call the object of faith, in the doctrines of the gospel, a virtue that transforms those who study them; there springs thence a complete religion, furnished with its proofs, its titles, with all its antecedents, as with all its consequences, which can dispense with you; religion contemplated by the heart proves and interprets itself, and when once it has displayed this virtue, it is once for all; that is to say, once emancipated, one does not return into bondage. Thus, wherever authority is supreme, and wishes to continue so, it will restrict within the narrowest limits possible the independent study of religion; it will put the divine documents aside, or will surround them with its own, which will, so to speak, blunt the glance, and veil certain truths, those which,

by their nature, penetrate furthest into the soul, and wake up most efficiently the sentiment and the need of independence. Wherever it sees itself threatened, or attacked, it concentrates its whole force on the breach, neglects internal and essentially religious truths, of which it is the depository, and attaches itself to external dogmas; that is to say, to those which concern its own right to teach or prescribe. Little by little, submission to authority becomes in its eyes the whole of religion; the necessity of authority all its philosophy; the demonstration of authority all its theology; and thus man, constantly diverted from the principal by the merely accessory, passes his life in building a house he will never inhabit. In all situations, authority will never see without displeasure religion carrying on its own affairs, pleading its own cause, and displaying its internal evidence; will never approve of its manifesting that highly rational character which shines through the supernatural, and even by means of the supernatural nature of the facts it announces. Faithful to its starting-point, it would willingly, if it could, render all things harder to believe than they naturally are; would make a merit of adhering to what repels; hard pressed as it is by two opposite necessities, that of encouraging the religious life, which is of necessity an internal life, and yet of compressing its efforts within certain limits; for it is clear that faith transmuted to sight dethrones authority in the soul of the believer; not, indeed, always formally,

but in principle and reality. He who believes thus, whatever he may say, whatever he may himself believe, has, by this very fact, ceased to depend upon authority.

3. *Sanctification.*

(1.) Sanctification ; Faith and Justification.

Although it has been found necessary to distinguish by different names the moments of spiritual life, yet they are still but moments of one and the same work ; the work of God in conversion, and then in sanctification, being continuous and indivisible.

Individual salvation is the spontaneous reunion, and the free and joyous subordination of the moral being to its principle ; of the created *Ego*, to the *Ego* Creator.

Your salvation is not accomplished outside of you or without you ; you cannot be saved unless you are changed ; and you cannot be changed, that is to say, renewed, without being, by that very fact, saved. Your salvation is not your own work, but, founded in God, it achieves itself in you ; and it is in considering these two great phases, these two great acts of mercy, that the gospel calls Jesus Christ the author and finisher of your salvation.

If it be certain that *without holiness none shall see the Lord*, that is to say, shall be saved, it is therefore certain that sanctification is the final end, the consummation of the work of God, who first *justifies*

us by his Son, that he may afterwards *sanctify* us by his Spirit.

We shall be saved by grace, or we shall not be saved. But it is equally certain that without holiness none shall see the Lord ; and it must needs be that the sanctification of the heart should have for its effect the sanctification of the conduct ; the second reproduces the first, as a statue reproduces the curves of the mould in which it was cast ; and it is in this sense that the gospel, as well as the law, can say that every one, in the day of judgment, shall receive “ according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil.” The effects reveal the principle, and it comes to the same thing to be judged by the effects of the principle as by the principle itself.

One of the most fatal as well as the most melancholy of illusions, would be to replace the continuity of progress by the perpetuity of regret, and to believe that it is enough, in case of our not advancing, to say daily to God, with a sorrow which, mark you, daily weakens, “ My God, I confess it ; I am the same to-day as yesterday, and I shall be the same to-morrow as to-day.” Is it not to such a regret as this that the Christianity of many in our day may be reduced ?

There are some of our sins which give no one a right to call the sincerity of our faith in question ; but decidedly the unmerciful man has not believed, the unloving is not a Christian ; he has no claim

to bear the insignia of Christianity. He has usurped this title ; he is an intruder ; he is further from the light and the kingdom of God than those who have never heard of Jesus Christ, or even than those who, having heard, have not believed in him.

If from pardon in itself we pass to its realization, we shall see plainly that here too we need a victim. Pardon consummated, salvation, heaven, are the hearts of men restored to God,—are God with us now, are God within us.

Man has brought about the fall ; God alone has brought about the reconciliation. God out of the heart was sin and its penalty ; God in the heart is pardon and its fruits. Those who should fear to diminish God's glory by saying that he cannot save without regenerating us, would be wrong ; there is nothing in this that infringes upon the sovereignty of God. He knows no other impossibility than that of doing wrong. We love to repeat with a certain Christian, The Son of God has merited for us regeneration.

That which characterizes a Christian soul, is not exactly enthusiasm and ardour ; still less is it talent and eloquence ; it is humble faith,—faith that knows how to wait ; it is humility ; it is, above all, love.

The impossibility of truly believing it without the aid of the Holy Spirit is one portion of this very truth, and one of the objects of Christian faith.

What is it in faith which saves in sanctifying, and sanctifies in saving ? It is the acceptance of

truth for truth's own sake. It is believing on the testimony of conscience. Faith in the gospel only saves because it renews; it consists in receiving into the heart doctrines qualified to change it.

To sum up is not to choose; it is to gather up a whole doctrine on one point. The living and rapid synthesis of faith contains the whole gospel, but here it is the soul that sums up.

Christian life is like a tree; its roots plunge into the ground, and its branches bathe continually in that subtle ocean that we call the atmosphere. The fertile soil in which our roots strike down is faith in pardon; the soft and fertilizing atmosphere in which our branches wave is faith in the perpetual assistance of that Spirit of holiness of which St. Paul says: "He who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit when he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Repentance is a grace,—for all, indeed, is grace. By ourselves, and without God, we can no more repent than we can believe, obey, persevere. This being thoroughly recognised, and recognised with thanksgiving, let us now go on to say that repentance, which is a *grace*, is no less a *condition* of salvation; that in the gospel, salvation is only offered to repentance, and that faith only saves in so far as it implies or produces repentance. Nothing more constant or more important in evangelical doctrine.

Whether it be before or after obtaining assurance,

it is for us all a special task, equally hard and indispensable, to strip ourselves of all self-righteousness and self-confidence before God, and confess ourselves lost sinners. To do this will inevitably cost the flesh a conflict more or less long, and more or less severe; and the victory is so difficult, is to be obtained by means which are so foreign to ourselves, and accomplished in so mysterious a manner, that among those who have triumphed, there is not one but is ready to declare that his faith is, in every sense of the word, a work of God; that is to say, the action of God in and by his action.

It is impossible that what is not a righteousness should be imputed as such; impossible that an involuntary act should become the condition of salvation, or that mere acquiescence in proofs should have any relation with the employment of celestial felicity and the possession of God himself. It is impossible that God should have ever said, "You shall believe in any manner, and any spirit whatever, that Jesus Christ is him whom I have sent, and this belief shall obtain you eternal life."

It is absolutely necessary that sanctification be comprised in faith, in the same way that a plant is in its germ; in other words, faith must be sanctifying; but how could it be so if we only received it by the mind and not by the heart; or if it were all the same in what way we believed, so only that we did believe?

Faith in its plenitude is an obedience of the

heart, and it is only on this condition that it is truly faith ; until then it is merely belief.

Faith, no doubt, renders us agreeable to God, but only inasmuch as it is an obedience of the heart, which, in point of fact, it needs must be.

There is in faith a beginning of sanctification. The soul that believes is a soul which, recognising the nothingness of its own righteousness, has sought for the righteousness of God ; which has referred itself to the mercy of God, to exist thenceforth only by him. Are not these the first-fruits of salvation ?

If faith saves, it is because it produces hope and charity ; without this it is not faith.

If sincerity be the only character and only merit of true faith, in what is a Christian better before God than an idolater ? Faith is a noble exercise of all the human faculties ; it is the harmony of the reason, the conscience and the heart, with regard to a doctrine given you as divine ; try to abstract one of these elements from it and it is true faith no longer ; take them all away, and you have but a coarse image of faith. If the heart be won without the conscience and the reason, faith is only a sensibility irritated by formidable images or flattered by seductive fancies. If conscience alone be laid hold of, you have the religion of remorse, not that of faith and love. If reason only be called forth, you have a philosophical doctrine without influence on the soul. It is necessary that the different faculties of which man is composed should simultaneously receive

the impression of the doctrines, and adhere to them in common.

In religious conviction we must make a distinction between the act in itself and its object. The act, under the most favourable theory, is nothing more than a reasonable submission to proof well administered; and, applied to moral and religious questions, it implies a certain diligence of the reason, uprightness of intention, and earnestness of soul. We do not give ourselves up to such researches, nor persist in them and pursue them to a definite result, without being more or less in the dispositions I have just mentioned; and these dispositions are doubtless a blessing in themselves, and would be the first and the last of blessings; would be all in all if the believer had only to prove his submission to any revelation whatsoever from God; and to admit on the testimony of his reason things that transcend reason. But this is not the case. In proposing certain things to our belief, God has not only purposed to lead us to an exercise of obedience, or rather reason; he has willed to bring us into contact with certain facts destined to modify us and renew our whole being. He has willed to create, and root in our hearts, by the contemplation of these facts, certain sentiments by which our whole life is to be changed. By an admirable provision, these facts, revealed by the gospel, are at once within and without us, external and moral, human and divine. We are saved by grace (here God

comes in), but by means of faith (here are we ourselves), the same fact has to be twice completely accomplished, completely on Golgotha, completely in our own heart. We are fellow-workers with God in the work of our salvation ; he gives the substance, we the labour ; or rather it is he who gives all without exception ; but he executes his purpose at once by himself, and by us. In a word, there is an objective truth ; but it must become subjective ; our heart must attach itself to it, incorporate it, transform it into itself, transform itself thereinto. Now, it can only be modified by this truth according to the nature of the truth. It is not renewed by mere belief, but by the object of belief. What that is the heart becomes. This is what is meant by religious belief.

It is very true that faith would produce life ; but the absence of faith itself comes from a diminution of life. We hold that in the matter of religion the difficulty of believing is connected with the weakening of moral conviction, and this with the torpor of the moral sense. Religion may revive in spite of all other obstacles, and repair all these evils ; but it is not the less true, that the decline of faith in a nation is a moral fact, an imputable fact, the stigmata or the scar of a sin.

He in whom the promise of salvation should have produced neither love nor zeal, nor desire of sanctification, would only have a dead and useless faith ; but he who should wait to accept the promise till it had brought forth all these effects within him, would

be reversing the economy of the gospel, and turning back from the way of grace towards the law, and from the merits of Jesus Christ towards human merits.

Salvation depends on what we *are*, and not on what we *do*.

There are not Christians by faith, and Christians by works; in that exclusive sense, neither are Christian nor even semi-Christian; they are Pharisees.

Be sure that you will only have life (and consequently salvation, for these are but two names for one and the same thing,) when your heart shall have perceived the truth as it perceives grief and joy; when it shall have become not only an impression that you receive by a given organ, but itself an organ of your moral being; when it shall be the stand-point of your judgment, and the motive power of your general conduct; when, occupying the summit of your existence it shall determine its incline and its course, just as a heaven-fed spring immediately influences the streams that flow from it, and through them all tributary streams, till they reach their goal. So long as you have not the consciousness of such a faith as this, do not call yourselves Christians. Prepare yourselves for further progress, or rather leave the easy seat you occupy; rise and walk forth to search for truth, happy to have had the way thereto pointed out; happy to be certain of possessing it, if only you truly desire to do so.

Do you obey in order to be saved, or obey be-

cause you are saved ? This is an option that God has not left open to us. He knows well that if we had to be saved by obedience, we never should be saved at all.

Salvation by obedience, this so rational system, is it not above humanity, above each man in particular ? Is there a single member of our race who can seriously embrace it without embracing condemnation, follow it to the end without arriving at despair ? While, on the contrary, that other system, so irrational that St. Paul speaks of it without circumlocution as "foolishness," but "the foolishness of God ;" does it not give to man, together with peace and joy, powers before unknown to him ?

Who is it who obeys if not the one who loves ? Who is it who loves, if not the one who believes himself loved ? Numbers do not constitute truth, and were there but one single man on earth who had accepted the gospel, it is in that man that we should contemplate humanity restored, the party of truth, the family of God. The question is not to know whether the conditions of salvation are generally accepted, but whether they are, in fact, conditions of salvation, and whether there be on earth any other principle, any other system by which man may be saved.

Let us leave St. James and St. Paul to combat opposite errors in one same spirit ; and to confront two forms of Phariseeism : St. Paul that of the law, St. James that of faith.

(2.) Faith a Work ; Work and Faith ; Faith and Will.

The whole of life is in faith, and he who has seen faith has seen life. Faith is not a distinct work, it is the whole work of God. May not the man who holds an acorn say that he carries an oak in his hand, since that acorn has in it all that is needed for becoming an oak ?

Faith and works, presuming them to be the true faith and true works, compose an indivisible whole, and mutually complete each other, so that works without faith are nothing, and faith without works is a mere word.

The gospel speaks of a gratuitous pardon, the basis and preliminary of the new covenant, then of faith in that pardon as the work *par excellence*, the work which contains all works, just as the grain of wheat embraces the whole ear. This faith, that God gives after having given its object, does what without it no work could have done or can ever do : it justifies us, it clothes us with the only righteousness of which we are capable, that of repentance, the relinquishment of self-righteousness, hope in God alone ; and, if we may so speak, the surrender into his hands of all our pretensions and presumptions. It empties and purifies the vessel of our heart, renders it meet to receive God, and becomes the healthy and vigorous root of a new life, since not only does it submit us to God by the most absolute self-abdication, but it unites us to him by

the most absolute trust. Faith is a faculty ; now action is the sign of a faculty ; the *faculty* which does nothing is not a faculty. Our faith, one with our works, manifests itself in them, or to use the words of St. James (with whom it has been in vain attempted to make St. Paul disagree), it acts *with our works*, which on their part, *render it perfect, or consummate it*. Faith and works, the trunk and the branches, form a whole, one only work, one only righteousness ; but sometimes, because the principle includes all, we are said to be saved by faith, that is, saved by the principle ; at others, because what we do is the evidence and the *measure* of what we are, we are said to receive according to our works.

That which saves, it is said, is faith, the internal principle of truth and life, which is to works what the trunk is to the branches. We agree to this perfectly. But we must not forget another point, which is, that our works are not only the manifestation of our faith and love, but their aliment as well. If life naturally assumes the form of the soul, the soul also takes that of the life ; the more faith acts, the stronger it grows ; the more love acts, the more it loves ; the exercise of our faculties is always profitable to them ; and this holds good in this sublime sphere as in all others. You will believe better, will love better, in proportion to your labours of faith and love ; and because you love you will have the promised happiness of the gospel, for love is salvation, love is heaven. Jesus Christ has said truly,

there is at bottom but one work, and that is to believe with the heart on him whom the Father hath sent.

A work of God, or a work worthy of God, must necessarily be a work of liberty ; and since there is a law that we have not ourselves made, and which binds us either voluntarily or involuntarily, a work commanded can only be a work of liberty through the intervention of love, which is, to speak precisely, liberty in obedience.

In order to love, nothing is needed but to believe ; and when we love, the works we thenceforth do are works of God.

One fact remains ; man will never be saved so long as he believes that he can be so by his works. One thing is certain, man will only be saved when he shall have given up the idea of being so by his works. It is not this renunciation which will save him, for this renunciation presupposes there being in him absolutely nothing by which he can be saved ; but is this renunciation a condition of salvation or not ? We answer, Yes, it is. Then is this renunciation a work, an action or not ? Again, we say, Yes ; it is one. Consequently a work is presented to us by the gospel as a condition of salvation, but like all other works, and more evidently than all others, it is a grace, a gift, and not a merit. It is the work of God, we repeat, in all the senses that this expression can bear ; in the sense that it is according to the heart of God, and also in that it is God who works it both by and in us.

Even if faith be a work, it is nevertheless distinct from all works conceived and accomplished without it. It may be called *work*, as much as you will ; it will no less remain *faith* ; it will no less be the condition of works, their beginning ; the most difficult of them all. It will be no less the narrow door by which we have to enter ; the condition that must be fulfilled, the victory that must be gained, the yoke beneath which we must pass before we can work the works of God. And, if all this be granted, the distinction subsists, and the truth is saved.

Faith which is internal and invisible, works which are sensible and external, form both together only one whole, one same work, whose parts differ merely in this, that some appear and some do not.

Faith in man is that living force, that principle of development, that incessant and hidden action ; and it is in this sense that we may say that it *has* works, as the seed of the plant may be said to *have* or to contain the plant. In other words, internal obedience contains in germ all obedience in action.

Works are still faith, but faith made perfect, faith displayed, ramified, fruit-bearing. The tree is not of more value than its germ ; life is not of more value than its principle ; but they show that the germ, the principle, have given all they ought to give, all they contained. Works have rendered faith visible, and by this have made it externally powerful, communicative, contagious, but they have not made it be what it was not.

Faith so immediately and imperiously implies works, works so necessarily presuppose faith—the two are so closely connected, and so nearly one and the same in the true Christian—that the opposition, the very distinction between them, has hardly any existence for him, and you will find him in many cases substituting the one for the other, insisting now upon faith, because faith includes works, and now on works, leaving faith unmentioned, because works include faith.

Christian faith is the victory over the world; it contains all the elements of a holy life; and what proves it better than any of our arguments, are the many pure, active, consistent lives, of which Christianity alone has furnished the type.

Faith begins for Abraham from the moment that, at a visible sign, he believes in the invisible; from the moment that, at the word of God, he goes forth to meet the unknown, the uncertain, nay more, the impossible,—for what more impossible than to slay his son? One does not indeed believe without having first seen; but afterwards to believe without seeing because we have seen once, to oppose God's word to the most terrible, most overwhelming appearances, to walk with a firm step in the night, to place our foot securely on empty space, is this a state or an action? Is this to act, or simply to believe? Does not belief of this kind amount to obedience? Yes; faith is the internal obedience of the conscience and the will. Faith, then, in

Abraham was a work, and as such it could be imputed to him as righteousness.

If there be a sense in which faith and works may be placed in opposition, there is another in which they are one and the same. What in the Scriptures stand opposed to faith are works without faith; never do they place faith and the works of faith in antagonism to each other.

Faith, let us never forget it, is a work that produces others, a mother work of which all good works are the offspring. The mother may be judged of in her daughter as well as in herself; the result is the same, the righteousness the same, the wisdom of God and the reason of man are satisfied in both cases, or in either form. But we will not stop here. If any one has failed to understand that faith, far from being a mere simple event foreign to our will, is, on the contrary, the most real and important use we can make of our liberty; this is because he has not seen that faith consists essentially in successively accepting the sentence that declares us all to be fallen and condemned, and the amnesty that raises while humbling us; he has not discerned faith to be an abdication of our own righteousness, a voluntary homage to the righteousness of God, a consecration of our whole life to his service; in a word, the most energetic as well as the most decisive, the most moral as well as the most happy act of which the grace of God can render us capable; and it is just by rendering us capable of

this that the grace of God saves us. Works, then, are but a continuation of faith—wisgh well this expression—just as the branches are a continuation of the trunk, the trunk of the roots; and just as branches, trunk, and roots are one, so works, faith, and grace are only one also.

Separated from the life of the heart, what is faith? How grasp, how manifest it? And even if one had been able to persuade one's-self that one believed really and firmly, entertained no doubts whatever respecting the object of belief, how would that avail us? This certainty is but the starting-point of faith, the coarse ore from which the gold has still to be disengaged.

The act destined to place us in a communion of thought, will, and practice with Jesus Christ must be a moral act. Faith is a desire, a homage, a promise, almost a love. It is all these at once, and it is the most simple of all things: a look of the heart towards the God of mercy, “an earnest and vehement contemplation of Jesus Christ crucified,” the abandonment of all our interests into his hands, the repose of the mind and peace of the heart in the certainty of his love and power, our hand placed in childlike confidence in his as our guide and protector,—such is faith. It may have for starting-point historical certainty, but that certainty is not faith; it may take the form of a philosophical theory, but this theory is not faith; it may remain in the condition of an opinion, but this opinion is

not faith ; it may resolve itself into a popular prejudice, but this prejudice is not faith. To believe is to trust one's-self, to believe is to depend upon God.

Faith is a moral act, but of a particular kind. It is an application of the will, but not an immediate one. It is not merely saying to ourselves, *I will believe*, as we say with regard to the duties of social life, *I will pay my debts*, *I will abstain from slander*, etc. In the former case the will has not for its direct object the act of faith, or any distinct act ; it has for object internal dispositions, pure sentiments, modifications not of the conduct, but the heart. Adherence to the truths of Christianity necessarily involves a revolution of the soul, and, so to speak, a displacement of the basis upon which we had been accustomed to rest our judgments ; it is not our conduct only that changes, but our being ; so that the question is not of *doing* other than we did, but rather of *becoming* other than we were. An invisible revolution, a mysterious transformation this, even for those of us within whom it takes place.

Faith only begins where the will begins, where the soul is employed ; where, in a word, there is action. Faith is therefore a work, or it is nothing.

In faith, as in that which continues it, there is an act of will, which is not the less an act of will because it is the gift of God.

In whatever way you view the subject, faith is not the cause of salvation, and faith is its condition. To have faith in the benefits of pardon, in the

fruits of the sacrifice of Christ, we must believe; and faith is a moral fact which takes place in man.

(3.) Assurance of Salvation ; Generality of Grace.

What is commonly called assurance ought rather to be called the *consciousness of salvation*, for one has this sentiment of salvation, as one has with regard to moral life, the sentiment of wishing to do right or of having loved; and with regard to bodily life, the sentiment of being well, being alive.

That which is called assurance of salvation instead of consciousness of salvation, is *God in the heart*; is that communion of will and of mind between God and man which man cannot evoke.

The idea of assurance of salvation does not merely come from without; does not only obtain admittance into our souls from the authority of the written Word,—it germinates, it springs up in the heart beneath the warmth of the sun of grace; it opens out there, ingenuous, wondering at and almost afraid of itself; dazzled by its own beauty, it hesitates and delays to recognise its existence; nay, it is almost ready through humility to deny it; but there *it is*, that suffices; and those who take part in its first manifestation—those that it had perhaps offended elsewhere when presented as an article of faith, as a bold anticipation of the logic of the mind over that of the heart,—those delight to welcome it, when it produces itself as a grace, accepted with bent knee, in surprise and trembling.

There is a Christianity which makes salvation depend upon this assurance of salvation, so that we are saved purely and simply because we believe that we are so.—Weigh well the following words, which we, on our part, have weighed. They in no way include the condemnation of assurance of salvation, in no way deny its legitimacy; they leave to that happy state its beauty, its truth, its claims to be the object of our desires and our prayers; nay, further, they do not prevent us from considering the assurance of salvation as the complement, the crown, and the perfection of faith. But the assurance of salvation, considered in its principle, is the Spirit of God himself “witnessing to our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. viii. 16). There is no other sufficient and reliable witness, and to replace it by simple reasoning, by a syllogism, is to infringe upon its right.

In other terms, this testimony is from within; it is intimate and irresistible as the sentiment of life. This perfection of faith is of the same nature as faith itself, which is the very substance or taking possession of the gospel blessings: a grace mysterious in its commencement as in its consummation, and of which merely intellectual faith and a merely logical assurance of salvation is only the counterfeit. There is no conscience which can, after careful examination, make such an assurance the earnest and condition of salvation. We are not saved because we are certain that we are so; but we are certain of being saved because we are saved. We must there-

fore alter the terms ; logic itself, and all analogies, demand it ; there is no sphere in which the reasoning that we condemn could be admitted by a person of common sense. Why then should such reasoning, bad everywhere else, be found correct here ?

This doctrine in which people have imagined that they found the only way of giving all to God and nothing to man, has, on the contrary, the effect of attaching salvation to a servile work, since in the dogma proposed, rigidly speaking, no iota of affection, no truly religious element comes in. This doctrine, preached generally by pious men, finds an easy access not only into humble hearts that confound it with the implicit submission of faith, but also into arid and mercenary souls, that it in no way deranges or troubles in their internal habits ; and as it interdicts to men any looking at their feelings, and still less their works, in order to know that they are of the truth, and to assure their hearts before God (1 John iii. 19), it soon annuls, without denying, that portion of the gospel which tends to the government of the heart and the reformation of the life. I speak of certain souls, not of all ; for a large number of those who believe that they draw their assurance from their mere acceptance of salvation, derive it unconsciously from the testimony of the Spirit, which, by its internal presence and action, attests to them with irresistible power that Christ dwells in them, and they in him.

If faith be the door of salvation, repentance is the hinge on which that door turns. Nothing is more

important than this maxim, and if in the terms of orthodoxy the devils cannot be saved, it is because they cannot repent. We should be carried too far if we attempted to study here that awful dogma of the impossibility of conversion, neither more nor less plausible in philosophy than that of the inadmissibility of grace. Let us only insist upon this, but strenuously insist, if the devils could repent they might be saved, because the cross of Jesus Christ is salvation for all who repent. The necessity, the virtue, the power of repentance, is the living truth of Christianity ; this is what renders it human, what renders it dramatic as well. This is the element with which no Christian poem can dispense, and with which a Christian poem is always interesting, and even always true ; at least as regards moral truth.

It may be said that there are faults where repentance is impossible,—this is another question, and it is a question ; it may be said, and it is only too true, that each one of our faults makes us worse than we were, and that from one on to the other repentance ever grows more difficult ; this psychology, which contains the very mystery of perdition, is as true as it is fearful ; but never let it be said that repentance being possible, can at the same time be in vain. Repentance is loyalty ; the absolution granted to repentance removes the sequestration under which the spiritual possessions of the penitent had lain ; and restores the free disposition of those revenues which are the daily graces of the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER III.

MORALITY.

I.—GENERAL MORALITY.

1. *Definition—Relations to Obedience—Intelligence—
Æsthetics—Religion.*

MORALITY, or ethics, is the art of living, or rather the art of submitting one's life to the authority of conscience, of subjecting it to principles elevated and powerful enough to dominate existence.

Morality is a great sphere revolving on an axis, the two poles of which are God and Death.

Considered in its nature, morality is obedience to the law of duty.

The idea of duty necessarily involves that of obligation to an authority external to and above ourselves.

As soon as we obey ourselves we cease to obey; and a duty which we believe to be directly and simply towards self is not a duty.

Obedience is left blank in the modern programme of human life and social progress, and we can hardly explain the preservation of the word, unless we suppose that it has found in the world some improper

and perverted application. We do not indeed always have our own way, nor all our way. We often act according to the will of another; in that respect nothing is changed, and there is therefore still obedience in the world—if to yield be to obey,—but where is the very principle of obedience? where is that which makes a duty of obedience? One would say, in a certain sense, that the present generation has lost it altogether; nor has this loss in any manner advanced the cause of freedom, for freedom, if true and worthy, is always proportioned to obedience, their principle in the depths of the soul being one and the same, and the two streams flowing so to speak from the same source. This consideration gives us the measure of the moral decline of our epoch; obedience is retiring rapidly, drawing with her her sister, liberty; they are not yet, thank God, out of sight; but he who wishes to reach them must make haste, their majestic figures have already half vanished beneath the horizon.

There is no obedience where there is no religion. This is a truth of experience and common sense. Religion is obedience, and the only principle of obedience; and what of the latter may still remain in a world or in a heart from which religion has retired, is only the still existing impress of the ancient empire of God over the conscience, a still perceptible remnant of a first impulse that is wearing away.

The true *principle of obedience* is liberty. Liberty

alone is able to obey; he who is not free cannot render true obedience to a law. He may yield, bend; he cannot obey. It is in order that we may have power to obey that we have been made free.

A will which claims to be under its own jurisdiction, a will which gives account of its actions only to itself, which is employed in other ways than in obeying, were it even otherwise useful and beneficial, would still be a perverse will.

Authority is in accordance with the natural man, obedience with the supernatural; authority follows, obedience resists the course of the stream of our own will; and this is why the first is preferred to the last; but this is also why the last becomes us best. And if it be affirmed that the spirit of submission is all the better displayed when it is voluntary, I readily agree to it, and confess that humility preserved under the purple, edifies me still more than humility in sackcloth. But the experiment is a hazardous one; and he who in aiming at power has no fear of it; he whose pride is pleasantly stimulated by the idea of commanding; he who, when power is his to wield, does not receive the last, the decisive word from duty and charity,—were it not better for such a one to remain among those who obey, than to take his place amidst those that command? At all events, let each one of us decide upon our course under the influence of this idea: I am born to obey, and authority must be for me only a form of obedience.

All that men and people have ever done of great, has borne the character of obedience. It is obedience, it is the faithful submission to a rule from without, which makes the dignity of human life. Enthusiasm, self-denial, love, draw their chief beauty from obedience. Detached from the principle of duty, separated from a precise and positive rule, these principles have no moral beauty in them. Duty is for practical life what reason is for intellectual; duty is the reason of the moral man; and love without obedience would be as little qualified for the government of life, as imagination without reflection would be for the government of thought. Now it is this character of deliberate morality and convinced enthusiasm, or, if you will, of enthusiastic conviction, that has stamped with its seal all epochs, and all individualities that have done honour to our nature; and it is this character that our own epoch lacks. On all sides, at the present day, men exclaim at selfishness and invoke love; but they forget how intimately love, disinterestedness, devotedness, are linked with conviction. It is not in intellectual, but in moral reflection that we are poor. In this sphere there is no longer any positive rule, nor consequently any true will; for where there is no rule, we may indeed desire, but we cannot will. Will springs from obedience; to obey gives the power to will. It is for this reason that our epoch, which may perhaps boast all other kinds of greatness, will fail in moral greatness, except as regards

some manifestations of the religious element, which blends at one point with the moral ; for morality is, in a very general sense, a religion ; being a bond, an obedience, a faith,—a faith in duty.

To obey is the law, the imperishable law of our moral nature ; and we must repeat to this age, so intoxicated with liberty, that the only liberty worthy of the name, is obedience in love.

In ordinary morality, it is obedience that opens heaven ; in the morality of the gospel, gratitude : an opened heaven produces obedience.

Let man say and do what he will, he cannot deny the notion of duty. Establish the existence of duty relatively to one single point ; acknowledge that you owe, or that some one else owes something to you ; from that moment duty finds itself the supreme principle. If the idea of duty exist anywhere, it is the foundation of morality. On this subject we may refer you to a book, and to a passage in that book, which manifests this truth with more authority and rigour than any man can do. At the opening of the Bible we see one single law and one single prohibition express itself by the most simple of emblems. But it is still a *law* and a *prohibition* ; and it was only the low sneering spirit of the last century that could turn into ridicule this most striking symbol of the most profound of truths : that God has not willed to be adored without being obeyed. God provides one only scope for man's obedience, but in that one rule duty enters the world.

In the second place, let us observe, that if virtue consisted in sentiment, it would have no special essence of its own; it would evaporate, so to speak, in the conjunction of interests and individualities. Sentiment is individual; it impels each one of us to certain actions only; each of us has his good or his bad affections, or rather each has good and bad. In the midst of this conflict, the rule of duty once dispensed with, where would be uniformity?

If, however, virtue cannot exist without obedience, neither does it solely consist therein. There is a rule that we have first to be acquainted with, as imposed from without, and that we must next accomplish with love; in other words, virtue must end by being absorbed in affection.

Our dignity is only in obedience, and to be strong against duty is not to be truly strong.

The knowledge of ethics is not morality; nor is the theory of duty virtue.

Intellectual culture in general is the pedestal of morality; but just as the pedestal does not give the statue, the culture of intelligence, taken alone, and from its own resources, does not produce virtue.

The heart is much less improved by the mind, than the mind by the heart. If some intelligence be necessary for morals, morals pay back the advance with usury; the delicate and exalted sentiments which belong to good morals necessarily correspond with exalted and delicate ideas; virtue raises the intellect, virtue civilizes, virtue gives the

desire for knowledge and understanding ; and we may be sure that the superior instruction that we look for will be far more readily procured by moral education, than a perfect morality from the culture of the mind.

We are able to govern the intellect ; we can make of it a well-trained steed ; to direct the will we must employ morality, duty. Whence comes it and what is its root ? This is a question which should never have arisen ; it is in vain that the principle be sought outside of the conscience ; there it is that burns the frail lamp lit within us, and preserved by the hand of God.

Schools may teach, but they do not inspire the abnegation of self. They only place beneath the feet of their adepts what may serve them as pedestals.

Morality is higher than thought ; and thought only attains to its full greatness in so far as it is the principle of morality.

Moral truths must be the object of a moral conviction ; they are truths of faith whose seat, or at least whose starting-point, is in the conscience, and that are only truly believed on its immediate testimony. All other kinds of belief in truths of this order is dead and vain. Science on such subjects is no substitute for conscience. The exercise of this last faculty constitutes moral life itself, which, being essentially personal, is not an affair of hearsay, authority, or even of logic.

In moral questions our soul is our eye ; we see

and measure objects by it alone. A voice can be given, by artificial means, to one who is deaf and dumb ; but as he does not hear, does not know the effect of the play of an organ that has been taught him, his voice is without accent, and his inflexions incorrect. So it is with the application of a system to moral conduct. Deprived of the warnings of the moral sense, the delicate indications of the heart, one is reduced to reasoning, to induction, a rough and dangerous guide ; we have to grope ; we constantly run up against some object or other ; our proceedings lack delicate shades ; we alternately speak and are silent out of place ; we are never warned by an inner voice against breakers ahead, never sure of the value of what we have said, nor the tendency of what we have done ; in short, one is like a geometrical figure, all squares and angles, trying to fit in to the soft undulations of a piece of ground, and now leaving an empty space between itself and the surface, now running one sharp corner into it and tearing it up. It is only feeling that is supple and sentient enough to touch equally on all points, and fit in equally to all parts of that uneven surface that human nature submits to its pressure.

It is only by the revival and renewal of those sentiments that are the bases of morality that a unity of moral notions can be re-established ; but these will infallibly re-establish it ; by which I do not mean that upon particular points of practice there can be no variation whatever ; the first version will

have been correct; the second, a pure matter of editorship, may lean to some divergencies; but between the editors of the idea, the unity of the idea will be real and felt.

The great diversities found in moral ideas, must depend essentially on the object presented to the mirror being vague, and so only giving a vague reflection, where each glance finds different forms, guesses at different intentions, sees a different object. Hence the great contradictions of the moral law in different nations. It became easy for this or that heterogeneous element to penetrate into the theory, because it had previously taken its place in practice; more often still, it was easy, in the indefiniteness and corruption of a sentiment, to join on to it, as a constituent part, some element that did not belong to it, and whose admission was brought about by the solicitation of some bad passion. It is true that all this has been reasoned out as well as it was possible. Scripture tells us that "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccles. vii. 29). But why did they seek out many inventions? Because their passions had need of them. It was not their ideas that corrupted their heart, but their heart which seduced their ideas.

What is a system in morals? A well-connected whole of notions the coherency of which may please the mind, but which has in itself no hold whatever upon the will. Let it be remembered that we are never modified by our mere convictions. He who

wishes to impel us to any given action, to submit our whole life to a rule, must, to begin with, find within our soul, or create there, some affection corresponding to his precepts. Without such an introduction as this, a system will never penetrate from our mind into our soul. To teach us our duty is nothing, unless we can at the same time be made to love it. This is the radical defect of all human systems of morality.

The sentiment of moral beauty is not virtue; on the contrary, one might be surprised to find how weak a dose of virtue sufficed for such admiration. It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that the very disposition which impels us to admire, sometimes slackens in us that active power which might furnish us with the means of meriting admiration. The sentiment of moral beauty is only the imagination applied to the practical side of virtue. It may exist in connexion with the most shameful excesses.

Goodness, which is moral truth, has this in common with the beautiful: that it is true. But it is with truth in its totality as with light. One in the bosom of God, who is the sun whence it emanates, it is refracted in humanity as in a prism; it divides itself into colours, of which each can exist, can be perceptible by the light only; yet not one of which is the light itself. There is intellectual truth, moral truth, æsthetic truth, or the beautiful. These are not absolutely unrelated, but they are distinct and independent. The sense by which each of them is per-

ceived and realized, is more perfect in some men, less perfect in others. It is frankly allowed that the greatest precision of mind, the greatest rigour of logic, does not lead to moral truth. Why then is it insisted on that moral truth must lead to æsthetic truth, and still more, alone lead thither? Why is it not conceded that the sense of æsthetic truth may be most delicate and developed in men to whom moral truth is comparatively unknown? The sentiment, the talent of the beautiful, is one of the graces of God: but why should not God be permitted to let this sun, like the material, rise on the evil as well as the good, and this rain fall on the just and the unjust? With the same right by which it is attempted to establish this solidarity of different truths, one might insist, even while here below, upon external happiness being inseparable from virtue, as doubtless it will be in heaven,—upon all virtuous beings being beautiful, all true Christians Apollos. I see no reason for stopping short in this line of reasoning. Under these circumstances, it would indeed be by sight that we should walk, by faith no longer.

It is very true that, arrived at a certain point, the corruption of morals involves that of taste, I will not say in individuals, but most certainly in societies; but never will the restoration of taste be that of morals, even supposing it were possible, when once taste is lost, to labour at its restoration before having restored morality.

It is also very true that we have within us a de-

sire of unity: a secret instinct admonishes us that truth is one; but those who speak and act on the supposition of absolute unity, misapprehend and ignore the mystery of the Fall, which has destroyed the internal unity of man on all points at once. Why is it that we distinguish between law and morals, crime and sin, the believer and the citizen, and, to rise still higher, between the liberty of man and the sovereignty of God? It is the Fall alone that explains these dualities.

I conclude by saying, let us aspire to the good and cultivate the beautiful; but let us not confound the one with the other, or pretend to reach the one by the other.

Up to a certain point, it is with morals as with art, of which Boileau said: "Sometimes a vigorous mind, too much cramped by art, departs from prescribed paths, and learns from art itself to over-leap its barriers."

When once the idea of God is subtracted from morals, one must necessarily arrive at utilitarianism, in other words, at egotism.

The standard of morals, then, is vague, arbitrary, and in every case limited, so long as we cannot comprehend it from the point of view of the author of all things, and, so to speak, from the summit of divinity.

We may affirm that he whose moral resolves do not spring from God and revert to him, cannot have perfection for the standard of his morals.

Without reference to God and to death, we may have moralizing ; morals we cannot have.

The pretension of founding morals on something other than religion, is an evil of epochs when religion, relinquishing its principal character, losing that moral savour which is the authentic stamp of its divinity, sinks into being nothing more than a bundle of dogmas and ceremonies.

God is in the moral world what his sun is in the physical : “ Nothing can be hid from the heat thereof.”

What is religion ? It is a consolation. The most complete summary of the most exalted moral precepts is not a religion. Morality only becomes religion by hope. To give us the most perfect code of morals would not be to give us a religion. Religion, no doubt, must include morality, and perfect morality ; but morality, taken in itself, reduced to itself, is so much the less a religion in proportion as it is perfect.

When morality ceases to be religion, it is the effect of a psychological, not a logical cause. This rupture originates in passion rather than reason. Morality has ever begun by being religion, and when it ceases to be so, this is not because it has been discovered by process of reflection that the bond between the two is not logically necessary, not essential ; but because, owing to different causes, this bond has been strained, and therefore weakened,—because things have come to such a pitch

that morality and religion, contradicting each other, a choice has to be made between them, and then it generally happens that morality is retained, which, however deteriorated it may be, is better worth than such a religion. The next step is to try and divorce morality from faith, linking one with the conscience, the other with I know not what faculty—neither conscience nor reason. This crisis has taken place amongst almost all civilized people, at the epoch when public religion was no longer of any value, and morality was still of some.

If the connexion that the great mass of men aver to exist between morals and religion be fictitious ; if it be a product of education, interest, weakness ; if, in a word, morals be not deduced from God : God as perfection, God as will, is no longer necessary, and man, detached from his principle, rolls to the bottom of the abyss.

2. *Principles: their Unity—Law and Duty—Conflict of Duties—Idea of Duty in our Age.*

Morals are one ; you cannot take a part and leave another ; duties the most different as regards their object hold together by a common bond ; we cannot be moral on one point and immoral on another, because we cannot be both moral and immoral. Man is intimately conscious of this truth ; he is constrained by his very nature to demand unity from his own life and the life of others ; he must

have all or nothing, and can no more conceive obedience on one side, and disobedience on the other, than he can conceive a sphere with a single pole. The absence of one pole leads him to deny the reality of the other; the voluntary, systematic, radical absence of one virtue forbids him to believe in any virtues; he only sees in them artificial imitations or pure instincts. Thus, when certain moralists, while preaching justice, neglect chastity, while exalting natural relations degrade others which, wholly conventional though they may be, are nevertheless the source of the holiness of the former; when in their zeal for general society, they throw contempt on family society, something irresistibly impels us inwardly to doubt that they are sincere in what they affirm, since what they deny is its earnest, its complement, or its consequence.

In morals, truth is one. Before one has seized the central point where all particular truths converge, one does not even possess these truths; at all events, one knows not how to make a sure and legitimate use of them. Before knowing why life has been given, what is the actual condition of the soul, what are its requirements and its powers, one cannot do anything really useful with the fragments of truth one still possesses; one cannot, at all events, order the whole of life in accordance with them: the disproportion is too great between an object so vast and truths so restricted; a rag will not cover a man. It is with these ideas as

with the shining splinters of a broken mirror ; not one of them will reflect the whole figure ; gather them up, put them laboriously together, still you have not a perfect mirror, nor will you have, till all these fragments, having been fused anew by the heat of the same fire, you once more have a single mass. So it is with moral ideas ; no one will suffice, nor can all these truths in juxtaposition constitute truth ; out of several systems combined in a mosaic, you will not make a true system. It is to the very centre of human nature and life that we must go ; it is the primordial truth we must find : that will conduct to all others, and will also reconcile them all.

The government of the moral world has not been conceived with less simplicity than that of the physical, and, in fact, whether man go right or wrong, it is always by a small number of maxims that he governs himself.

No doubt, each of your actions has its moral value, its character, its colour ; but each is at the same time only the natural product of a principle ; each is of much less worth in itself than as showing you your own worth. It is this internal worth that you have to ascertain ; it is this that God knows, and according to which he estimates and judges you.

The laws of the moral world are neither more nor less strict than those of the physical ; everywhere we discover in them the God who has created "*all things* according to weight, number, and measure."

No one would doubt this a moment if laws of this order avenged their infringement as do the laws of the physical universe; if false reasoning were followed by a fall like a false step, and sin burnt like fire. But here reason speaks as loud and as strongly as experience; and if we only listen we remain convinced that the invisible world has its numbers, its quantities, its mathematics, as well as the material.

Morality is one; we cannot conceive it otherwise; it is composed of sentiments which hang together, it may even be called one single sentiment—justice—radiating expansively towards all the objects of our relations. Any single one of our duties, conceived of in its spirituality, in its holiness, would lead to all the rest; but we cannot conceive of holiness in one particular point without conceiving it in all; and we cannot conceive it in all without the idea of holiness in general, and this idea cannot be isolated from that of God.

The moral law, if you prefer it, is an arithmetic in which are only even numbers; no fractions. If there were any half duties we could understand that the principle of the law might be unequally compromised. But there are none; either we ought or we ought not. This is the only distinction, so that in whatever point the law be infringed, the suffering and the wrong is in point of principle the same; or, to resort again to an image which we neither can nor wish to avoid: the law is only heart, the law

is all heart; in whatever direction or manner you strike, it is the heart that is struck, and the heart is the life.

Morals do not consist entirely of formulas. Morals in their beginning are as efficacious presupposed as taught; it is as important to give the child a prejudice in favour of the right, as to present him with its rule. There is a good taste in moral matters as elsewhere; and without deprecating theory, which will have its turn later, I should like instinct to take the initiative. Truth is not merely an idea that we must know; it is an air we must breathe, a rule we must follow, a glance that we must employ in gazing on the beautiful and the good. This method, which is that of God himself, is too much neglected: God saves us by showing himself; faith is a look.

In *principle*, we maintain that morality is *one*, and that it encircles the whole of life; that in one single exception, made consciously and deliberately, there is a disavowal of the whole moral law; that he who is not ready to apply it universally, absolutely misapprehends it; that he who will not allow it to be supreme treats it as a slave. And consequently it is permitted, and even enjoined us, to believe that those who follow it in any partial manner, whether removing it out of private life in the interests of public, or receiving at their own hearth the law they banish from the palace or the *curia*, that those, we say, are not, in the full force of the term, moral

men, and that their virtue, carefully analysed, would be reduced to an aggregation of elements all foreign to the conscience.

That man whose conduct is not guided by principle is blamed in the world, and no doubt justly so; but in order to change the very groundwork of life, of what avail are principles, unless they be at the same time motives?

In morality the rule is little, the motive all.

It is impossible to conceive special duties without supposing a general duty; nor particular virtues, without forming to one's-self the idea of primordial virtue; nor order of any kind without having the notion of a principle of order. Now, the single and abstract sentiment of obligation not furnishing this, we must find a medium between that sentiment and special affections; something less abstract than the first, and more of a *unity* than the last. It does not seem to us that a philosophical mind can refuse to recognise at least as a want what we lay claim to by a stricter title, and such a mind must, we think, be pained to see in moral science only a catalogue, not a system, and to feel that the bond of a true unity is absolutely wanting to his doctrine.

But science has not found, and will not find, this living unity, because science cannot introduce into the heart of man the central sentiment which ought to reanimate and rectify the whole of morality; it is from a special communication and supernatural fact that we have to expect it; whence it results

that man, proud though he be of his reason, can neither owe to it philosophical nor moral truth, and that to go from the one to the other is to go from instinct to revelation and revelation to instinct. The property, and the greatest glory of reason, is to bring us back to both these two terms.

The discovery of this regenerating principle has long been the task and the despair of moral philosophy.

The love of good alone produces the true hatred of evil.

An action is worth exactly so much as the intention that has prompted it. This truth cannot be controverted without overthrowing the whole of morality, and even denying its principle.

To pursue any given end from interest or from principle, is in point of fact to pursue two different ends, and to walk in two different ways. Under the same word there are two ideas, because two motives.

A moral idea is in itself an idea conformable to moral truth. It is an idea of purity, peace, power, justice, and love. It is an idea which unites man to God and God to man.

Moral reality is only in the individual.

You may say what you will, the human soul can only be raised to and maintained at its utmost height by proposing to it an ideal, immaterial, celestial aim. All that is of the earth is earthly in its tendencies and attainments ; pure morality is a plant which grows in heaven.

The general hatred that a pure morality inspires is at all events an *index* of its goodness, since it is impossible that pure goodness, pure beauty, pure virtue should not meet with this reception from such as they fail to subjugate.

Happiness, power, life, are not the end, but the means of accomplishing the moral law.

Truth is consistent; man is much less so. No doubt nothing real will be got from him in morals without inspiring him with it; but, at the same time, everything must be commanded to him, even happiness; it is necessary, not once for all, but at each moment, to create within him the new man.

I see in law and duty two forms of the same principle; every duty supposes a law, and *vice versa*. Natural morality cannot dispense with God; the science of jurisprudence in vain seeks to dispense with *morality*; in awakening the idea of law, it needs must awaken also the idea of duty. Law and duty are one and the same, but it is very true that life, like science, separates them.

In the eyes of the Christian, and in so far as he is concerned, no law is law if it be not at the same time duty.

The principle of duty, which is the law of the invisible world, receives in the visible world a solemn consecration by the fact of generous men attaching themselves to it, without hope, or against hope, and on the faith of an idea boldly attempting the impossible. For in the actual condition of

humanity every restoration of moral truth is, to the eye of flesh, stamped with the impress of impossibility.

Every duty involves a law; there is no more sacred law than that of fulfilling our duty; nay, here below it is the only absolute law; for law rests on a primitive necessity. Now duty is the first of necessities, and, strictly speaking, the only one.

The right to fulfil a duty is the first of rights, the only absolute right. It is always presupposed; we do not ask it, we take it.

No right more sacred than that of fulfilling a duty. All other ways of conceiving a right are vulgar, and but another form of egotism.

Circumstances must go for nothing in the acceptance of a duty which in its nature is absolute; or if they do go for something, it should be simply as motives for duty and corroboratives of it.

If to the idea of right the idea of duty be not joined, if each one be not more intent upon knowing his duties than knowing his rights, we shall have a sad sort of society; it will resemble a machine where, for want of oil, everything creaks and snaps; and it were better, if such were possible, to have a society in which each thought of his duties and not of his rights, than one in which each was intent upon his rights and unmindful of his duties.

Duty does not consist in suffering everything, but in suffering everything for duty. Sometimes, indeed, it is our duty not to suffer.

It is not very difficult to raise difficulties against

duty, nor very easy to remove them ; and in this conflict, he who stands up for duty very frequently comes off worsted. It is thus that, in order to judge a thing by its results, we must have under our eyes, not the gross product of the circumstances, in the midst of which the principle is to act, but their net product ; I mean the degree of action and importance to which these circumstances will have been gradually reduced by the very action of the principle introduced. It is this influence that is generally overlooked altogether by the adversaries of principle, or of its realization.

We must admit it ; it is by the sentiment of his social relation that man is, in point of fact, led to the idea of duty, and by that to the idea of religion. Isolated from the contact of his fellow-creatures, he would remain a stranger to God, and would fall back into the class of brutes.

But to conclude from this fact of the relation of man with society having been the occasion of his knowing duty and God, that we are only moral and religious in virtue and by means of society, is to fall from truth into falsehood. The idea of God, once known and defined by the world,—God, so to speak, once created by the conscience,—it is evident that this great idea becomes the primary one in man ; and that it is upon this divine relation, not anterior, but superior to all others, that all others are to be based.

Nothing more beautiful than to do one's duty,

when and where one is master. But in order to this, it is necessary for each to place himself in presence of the supreme Master, the only and the true sovereign; if we look at him, we are enlightened. People may say what they will; it is only in this light that we really see clearly.

God, then, has not organized our nature nor morality so as to make us sacrifice our duties one to the other; and the fulfilment of the precept, to "speak the truth in love," is never impossible. I do not believe that the interests of truth can ever exclude or suspend the obligations of charity, any more than charity can ever oblige us to lose sight of the interests of truth. Charity is a part of truth, as truth is the natural means and true soil of charity, which can indeed grow in no other soil. Man should be always true and always charitable; should always believe and always love.

There are duties that are relative; there are absolute duties; the former, which with regard to the latter are but means, may vary; the second are immutable; and it is quite evident that there must be in life something immutable,—some fixed point to which, in the midst of differences and variations, everything may be referred.

What characterizes our epoch is the weakening of the idea of duty, which is almost everywhere absorbed by that of right. Never have so many efforts, nor so open and so ingenious, been made to dispense with duty in the arrangements of human life,

and in our social relations. It is by this that philosophical history will characterize our age, or, at all events, this period in which we live. No doubt that duty corresponds with right, and presupposes it, as one pole does another; to proclaim duty is to take right for granted, either on the part of some man, or on that of God; but with respect to the culture of human morality, it is by no means the same thing to speak to an individual of his duty or about his right. There is an infinite difference between the two methods, or rather the two systems; for it is a difference of ends, not means. The preaching of rights addresses itself to egotism, that of duty to conscience. The gospel has only spoken to man about his duties, nowhere of the rights that he may claim, but only of those he is to recognise and respect in others; nor do I know that there is anywhere to be found in the gospel a word that we may render into our language by that of right, except in one single passage, where it is applied to God, of whom only it can be said, in an absolute sense, that he possesses rights. Let people dispute as much as they like about this partiality of Christianity for duty; upon this singular balance with only one scale; these relations where no reciprocity is premised nor supposed; this law which only speaks of sacrifices, and never insures compensation; they are welcome to do so; and I am very glad that this austere characteristic of Christianity should be duly established. If this religion is to be

hated, let us at least know why—this hatred is better for it than a partiality without motive or result—but do not let us have chanted simultaneously, and in one breath, the triumph of duty and the dirge of Christianity ; let not the advent of duty be celebrated when Christianity departs.

3. *Moral Observations: Virtue, Egotism, Voluptuousness, Pride, Suicide, Gratitude, Honour, Love of Esteem—Consistency, Power of Attention—Miscellaneous Thoughts: Malignity and Goodness, Imitation and Singularity.*

There are three kinds of force : material or external force, which is alternately that of the athlete, the multitude, and the body politic ; the force of will,—I mean of pure and simple will, independent of its aim ; and finally, the force of virtue, which is composed of that of will and of attachment to moral truth ; or which is perhaps only this very attachment confirming and exalting the will. By involuntary and unanimous consent, the supremacy amongst all these forces belongs to that of virtue. But virtue is obedience ; obedience is the seal of virtue, the virtue, as it were, of virtue itself. He who only obeys himself does not obey ; he who is only virtuous to please himself does not even know what to be virtuous means ; and whatever is given to pride is so much taken from virtue. There is frequently less difference than is supposed between the worship of virtue

and that of will. They are easily confounded, easily end in blending into a proud and heathen virtue. Stoicism has only a step to take to arrive at this; and I know not whether we should not say that it implies a descent from force to feebleness; for, separated from its aim, or losing sight of it, what is the force of the will? Is it indeed a force at all? Is it not rather a weakness?

Take away obedience from virtue, and you are on the point of giving to will the place that belongs to virtue,—of taking will for virtue; and when you have once got to that, nothing will long separate or distinguish you from the worshippers of material force.

Man does not hate virtue in itself, but on account of the hindrances that it opposes to his desires; and if its presence brought no constraint, and its aspect no humiliation, he would never cease, be sure, to admire and to love it. Such is his disposition at the outset of his career, and such is the principle of his self-confidence. He loves virtue as one beneficially interested in a testament, and calculates that this testament will be in his favour, for he reckons without his passions, which as yet he does not know.

Virtue must not be an accident, but the continuous development of a principle deposited in the depths of the soul.

A virtuous life, by which I mean one solidly and generally virtuous, is always difficult; a thousand obstacles both within and without rise in opposition

to it. Too often the most honourable features of our character are due to our temperament, or to some motive foreign to the true principle of virtue. Nevertheless these stimulants, these external encouragements, are comparatively feeble in private life. The glory of being a good friend, a good father, a good neighbour, a worthy man, is by no means a dazzling thing, and gradually reduces itself to a good negative reputation, valuable, no doubt, but not qualified to exalt the soul. Political virtues have far other encouragements : glory, or distinction at all events, follows closely on their track ; those who practise them are incessantly sustained by attention, warned by clamour, urged on by applause. The love of country, in itself a more poetic thing than any private affection, is re-inforced by the love of glory. The two are blended beyond power of separation ; he who feels them hardly knows which principle he obeys, so thoroughly are they identified. The importance of a virtue by which the universe profits, naturally tends to the supposition that it may be a substitute for all virtues ; gradually, therefore, the man emancipates himself from the rest whose yoke is irksome ; there is no longer time to think of them. “Great morals kill the small.” You must *carry the last* while the *first carries you*. It is no longer virtue but enthusiasm ; and vulgar duties are the less thought of that the world inquires very little whether or not they are fulfilled ; the family man is forgotten in the statesman ; and the nation

does not question the one who electrifies, exalts, and enlarges it, as to what goes on the while in his own home circle.

In moral questions we have no absolute error, but incomplete truth : truth exaggerated and ill-applied.

There are many errors in morals, and if we examine them closely, we shall, I think, see that they are so many stray truths, which, like lost children, ask to be brought back to their mother. It is not in the power of man to invent a pure error, but as possessor of a truth he displaces it, isolates, exaggerates, and exasperates it into becoming a falsehood. This state of *dislocated* moral ideas has always existed since the fall of man ; and it is strikingly exemplified in our days in all those who live without Christianity.

Christianity calls home and gathers all these ideas into its breast, arranges, orders, balances, and makes truths of them ; but until they are elaborated in its alembic, they obscure more than they enlighten.

It is a great mistake with regard to human nature to confound terror and fear. In terror there is nothing moral or noble ; it is an entirely selfish sentiment. It is not so with fear. The evils we fear may be of such a nature that the impression created by the thought of them is more calculated to ennoble than to degrade the soul.

There are three kinds of selfishness : the one that says *I*, and stops short there ; that which says *I and mine* ; and finally, that which says *mine and I*.

Selfishness is more or less the character of the whole world; egotism is *something* of which each one of us has *something*. The difference is little more than in degree and mode of manifestation.

Egotism may sometimes contribute to happiness, taking the word in its lowest sense; but egotism is the disposition most likely to cause unhappiness when it is combined with sensibility.

Egotism has for its distinctive characteristic the seeking satisfaction in the isolation of the individual. And in point of fact, self-love in its purity does not prevent us from uniting ourselves to the rest of the sentient creation; egotism separates us from it; the first expands, the second contracts us; the first lets us tend to all beings in the universe, the second makes them all tend to us; the first permits us to multiply our existence by sympathy, the second reduces us to an individual life, which thus reduced is a death; the first is harmony, the second discord in the universal concert; the first is truth, the second falsehood; and, in a word, the second is an abortion of the first. Such is egotism, for which everything is an instrument, and nothing an end but itself. This bastard of self-love is the father of a numerous and hateful family. Vanity, avarice, voluptuousness—all the passions which turn us back upon ourselves, imprison and bury us in self—are the detestable elders of this impure brood. But it is not only in these that egotism reproduces and multiplies itself. It is present in all our purely natural affections; it easily

rules there, and sometimes even it rules exclusively. Alas ! the affection which has become on earth the type of love itself, maternal affection, is not always free from egotism, and its egotism is sometimes cruel.

Those whose attention gropes perseveringly in the depths of society are not tempted to speak lightly of sins of unchastity. To them the unity of the moral being, and the intimate relations between all its parts, manifest themselves in external facts. To them the moral being is not an archipelago, whose islands, invisible the one to the other, only communicate by means of oars and sails and perils ; it is a vast and solid continent, traversed in every direction by roads, canals, rivers ; or rather, it is a river formed by the confluence of a multitude of brooks. Dye with blood, or sully with clay, any one of these brooks you will, the river too will take the dye, and will carry that stain to the sea.

Voluptuousness does not awake all the passions. It is even calculated in the long-run to extinguish some ; but by those that it does awake, and perhaps by some of those that it lulls to sleep, it does more irreparable harm to society than any other sin.

Licentiousness kills the good in us, and kills also by its side whatever might have provisionally and partially held its place.

As though chastity were the band that held together the sheaf of all holy affections and duties, we see continually, is in proportion as that band becomes lax, all others gradually relax too. Impurity is

at the outset of all disorderly lives. It alone produces more crimes of every kind than all other passions ; it gives birth to a thousand passions latent before, and which had not else been roused ; it is the most corrosive and contagious of all poisons ; it is from it that we must ask the secret of the slow corruption and fall of empires ; it is by it that begins that silent process of dissolution which succeeds to epochs of highest prosperity ; it is it that begins the vengeance irrevocably reserved to all abuse of force :—

“Sævior armis

Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem.”

The flesh, correctly viewed, may be compared to a slave, that we have to govern with severity in order not to be governed by it. The flesh, in the intoxication of voluptuousness, is the freed man who gets hold of the ear of the prince, instils poisoned words into it, and never rests till his former master has become his slave. And this, be it remembered, applies to all enjoyments ; for nothing is indifferent, and all things hang together. Every enjoyment, too much indulged in, impoverishes us spiritually in the same proportion ; and I can understand that it might be said, “That arm-chair has kept in its cushions a portion of my soul.”

The end of the voluptuous is, that their soul degenerates into flesh. The sources of love, mercy, and faith dry up. The heart, which has sent all its life to the senses, withers and hardens. A ferocious

egotism slowly makes its way there, and seats itself on the empty throne of the generous affections. The very feelings of nature are blunted. There is darkness, cold, horror, within the soul ; while around it, I mean in the flesh, everything is lit and inflamed by the fire of lust ;—a house lighted with a thousand lamps as on the evening of a festival ; house of gladness, you would say ; enter it, you will find within only a corpse, and demons that dance around it.

As a general rule, whatever is given to the flesh is taken from love ; whatever is denied to the flesh swells love's treasury.

It is here that we must speak terrible words, but with reverence and trembling. To God everything is possible ; even of stones he can make children to Abraham ; but there is something more rebellious than stones,—it is the heart of the voluptuous. Far from me be classification or rash exclusion,—rather would I lay my hand on my mouth ; but it does seem to me certain, from the nature of things, that the heart of the voluptuary offers more obstacles than any other to renewing grace. May I dare to say it ?—this grace has, in sinners of another kind, something more living to lay hold of ; it appeals at least to a soul ; whereas at a certain period in the life of the voluptuous man, his soul, as I have said, has passed into flesh. The whole system of the gospel with regard to regeneration, supposes in the heart to be regenerated a certain capacity of believing and loving ; here it is extinct, all the springs are broken ;

hardly, indeed, is there any room left for fear and despair. For such a one spiritual things have no longer any colour, any savour; he has lost the sense by which men see or taste, I will not say religion, but matters that relate to the soul; all in his being is insipidity and languor. He is aware of it; he feels that he ought to groan, but has not the strength to do so; he foresees his own doom, and has not energy enough to be alarmed at it; he repeats intentionally to himself terrible words, and they die away on his heart as sound within a leaden bell.

That great league of human pride which makes of humanity a chimerical individual, and reduces the individual to nothing, reassembles, without uniting them, the builders of a second Babel around a vague and colossal idea, at the feet of which the prodigy of the confusion of tongues is already repeating itself.

Pride is a bad guardian, an unfaithful trustee of the treasures that were destined for you. He gradually devours them all,—conscience in the bud, gratitude, love, and prayer; reaches even that joy that was the first fruit of your new faith; gnaws it incessantly by doubt; for pride is as full of anxiety as humility is full of assurance. Pride is not made to hope but to fear; it teaches the soul to tremble, by persuading it to leave its true support in order to rest upon itself; it gives to it at intervals fearful moments of darkness, and sometimes ends by wrapping it entirely in the night of despair.

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Pride may raise us for a while above abjectness ; but it cannot sustain us for ever in the void. All our dignity is in obedience ; every other support proves treacherous.

The most brilliant icicle resolves itself into dirty water ; so is it with pride when the thaw comes. It is only noble, and above all, humble souls, who retain in misfortune all their claim to respect.

What is it that corrupts all our works ? Pride and self-righteousness,—the pride that persuades us that our personal powers suffice for the task that is imposed upon us,—the self-righteousness which attributes the merit of it to ourselves, and defrauds God of it ; pride, I say, and self-righteousness, which, by preventing us from believing that we have need of God and depend upon him, make of each man his own god, and erect him an altar in his own heart. This is the secret atheism of every man before the grace of God has opened his eyes. This is the atheism that blends with all our works, and even with our acts of religion. This is the atheism of many pretended Christians, less Christian consequently, it may be, than many heathens.

It suits the nobility of our fallen nature, reduced to choose between various forms of spiritual misery, to prefer unqualifiedly that of pride to that of covetousness.

Suicide is only the frank expression and sublime summary of a life without God. It is the logic of all, more rapid in some. The majority, by means

of pleasure, diversions, perhaps crimes, exorcise that thought of death that they carry within their breast. If these pre-occupations were to fail them, they would wish to die. Man can only belong to God or to death. Between these two abysses that invite him, there stretches out a narrow and perilous ridge, and the art of the world consists in never letting eye or foot quit this. If the glance wander, if the foot slip, there is only one alternative. All worldly lives border on despair. The suicide is only a consistent worldling.

The act of which we speak is interesting, inasmuch as it brings to light one of the principal features of actual society, namely, despair.

Every worldly man bears within him the germ of despair; every life led without God is big with suicide.

Human morality, which flatters itself with possessing certain specifics against every form of vice; which cleverly opposes nature to nature, and selfishness to selfishness,—human morality confesses that it has no principle to bring to bear against suicide. At this last point of moral disorganization it feels the resources of its art fail. It might indeed find means to justify and encourage suicide; but if it shrinks from this fearful expedient for concealing its impotence and saving its self-complacency, it must needs confess itself conquered, and must give over its patient into the hands of a rival audaciously despised: into the hands of Jesus Christ.

Suicide has a sort of apologetical value. It is

the *reductio ad absurdum* of atheism, and hence of deism, which is but a refined atheism. It draws up the comparative balance-sheet of natural religion.

Despair alone will not make Christians, but despair may open out ways towards truth. Desire is not an argument, but it is well that God should have given to truth the aspect of happiness. He has rubbed the edges of the healing cup with honey; do you perhaps think he ought rather to have placed gall there? You might have done this, you stoical souls; but God is no stoic. No, say you; neither gall nor honey—nothing at all! Philosophers, you know everything except humanity; but God knows it: leave him to act as he will.

Despair is on every side. Man, since his fall, has two barriers against this abyss: faith, in the first place, and prejudice, which is a kind of faith. But what must be the despair of a generation that is above prejudices, for it comprehends everything; and below faith, for it concludes nothing? And how should those who have both the fewest prejudices, the least possible faith, and at the same time a very ardent imagination, and very active mind,—how should such as these fail to be the representatives of that profound “*ennui*,” which is only a form or a prelude of despair, and of which suicide is the logical conclusion?”

When this disposition is complicated with pride, which is almost always the case, the disease becomes more acute, the catastrophe more imminent.

Gratitude, looked at in itself, is not precisely a virtue, but it is at least the most disinterested sentiment that man can experience. Human morality, that men have already so mutilated, may still stand many shocks before gratitude will lose its place in the general estimation. It is of all sentiments, perhaps, the one to the credit of which we least willingly relinquish our title.

Justice is more rare than love, because it is more difficult ; exacts more, and gives less delectation. A labour of love has not that bitter taste of obedience ; we anticipate that in an act of justice. In love, all is freedom, joy. If we obey, it is without feeling it, without willing, planning to do so ; and indeed it is only obeying ourselves. But acts of justice, when they come before us as such, are felt to be painful efforts, and before them our courage often dies. The great omissions, the great stains of our individual and social life, relate less to want of love than want of justice ; and never will love, such as it is to be found in the natural man, make good those omissions or efface those stains. Must I make this plainer by an illustration ? What more necessary and what more rare than gratitude ? It is spoken of as a thing of course. You might imagine, from the general terms employed about ingratitude, that it was an exception, a quite rare deformity. . . . Alas ! . . . The truth, on the contrary, is, that virtues believed to be far less common, and much more prized, such as compassion, liberality, devotedness.

are more easy and frequent than gratitude. Why is this? Because gratitude is pre-eminently justice, and presents itself under the form of an obligation and a debt.

Honour, that powerful motive of modern civilisation, often usurps the rights of conscience. This is incontestable. But if we search out its origin, we shall be obliged to attribute to conscience both a large part of the notion to which honour attaches its prestige, and the very principle of that force in virtue of which man adheres to honour. It is a force diverted from its legitimate function, but nevertheless, although vitiated, it is a form of that sentiment of rule and dependence which is found at the basis of the moral sense, and through which man testifies to something above him.

In a relative sense, honour is something; and we thank the man who preserves chivalrous traditions in a money-loving age. But what proportion is there between this chivalry of character and manner, and the totality and depth of human life? How superficially does the former penetrate it; at how few points does it touch! How accidental and transitory are the junctions of honour with conscience! What a poor compass is that whose needle turns with the vessel itself, and points to the pole in all directions! What a morality is that which prescribes, according to the age, the most opposite conduct, and whose centre is displaced by the least variation in manners! Finally, what sort of morality

is that which excludes humility, and which, even in professing Christianity, seeks a shelter for pride?

Outside of Christianity, the love of approbation is one of the best things to be met with in fallen man.

It is only by an air of truth that falsehood pleases us; it is only through the measure of truth it contains that we can be seduced by it. Singular condition of our soul! We can neither bear to have all truth nor all falsehood; we want a little of the one to make the other go down. In morals, as in literature, we are enchanted with certain qualities, whose charm for us consists in their distant relationship to good morals, but which would displease us if that relationship were more near. We have a natural taste for the false, but we have also a natural want of believing the false to be the true. It is too often to this that the homage good morals obtain from us may be reduced.

Hope is a virtue without whose aid it would be doubly beautiful to attempt great things, if without hope it were possible to accomplish them. It lives on charity as charity lives on hope.

All the world may be said equally to deserve the charge of inconsistency, because all the world has principles which are tolerably high, and conduct which is much less so. Each one internally suffers from this want of harmony, and each seeks to remedy it, either by raising his conduct to his prin-

ciples, or by lowering his principles to his conduct, which last, being much easier, is by so much the more frequent. Never, however, do the two terms that have to be brought near succeed in touching : inconsistency is the permanent, one might even suppose it, the normal state of all men who have principles ; but in a general way it does not strike us much in the majority, either because the last method being the most effectual, the distance between their profession and practice is not very great, or because they do not give publicity to the maxims they hold.

Consistent men are highly prized in the world ; and that is natural enough, for one knows at least what one has to expect from them. But I am persuaded that if we subtract the help of pride, and the violence done to nature, we should see that this consistency is but a factitious tension or an illusory claim. Outside of Christian truth, there is only an artificial consistency.

It would be well to examine if we know how to listen. To listen ! Most rare thing even amongst the best. To listen ! most infallible sign of meekness and humility ; to listen sincerely, which does not mean to wait in silence, and with more or less patience, till people have said their whole say, that we may communicate to them in return what we have been cogitating while they were speaking ; not so, but to come out of our thoughts to enter into theirs ; to put ourselves into their place ; to

sympathize even with their prejudices ; and to follow their reasoning or their narrative with all the simplicity of an affectionate curiosity.

I have known some persons, of whom I am persuaded that could the bottom of their heart have been suddenly revealed, it would only have made us love them more ; nay, there are in every sincere life, moments in which a man would gain by being judged from within : moments in which repentance, humility, prayer, love, are so intense, that the text, I mean the inner feeling, must be still better than the translation,—I mean the actions. This being premised, why should we not go on to say that there is that in our secret thoughts which, could they inscribe as they shape themselves, would be far more than enough to make us hated ? It is true that the humble courage of the confession may counterbalance, or at least correct, this painful impression, and that the avowal of our faults may sometimes render us more loved than these faults rendered us disliked ; and blessed be he, who by extorting an entire confidence, helps us to expel our miseries by a free avowal of them.

To believe in virtue while seeing the triumph of vice, is not more honourable than to keep a faith in truth, amid the general flood of error and falsehood.

In our eyes, perseverance in good is neither a small nor a common virtue.

Evil begins by all manner of ends ; good by one only. All sin may be the first sin ; but there is

only one primary virtue. There may be incompatible sins ; while all virtues are in perfect accordance, and lend a mutual support : no man can have all vices.

Order is the ornament, the embellishment, the luxury of poverty ; nothing so sad as pretences to wealth and elegance in a poor home. But, order in poverty, on the contrary, reveals a firm mind, an earnest character, a peaceful heart. Order and cleanliness in the poor are almost a virtue, inspire an involuntary respect, and their absence detracts much from a poor person's claim to consideration.

It is the poor who receive and treasure in their hearts the exhortations we address to the rich.

How poverty, hated by all the world, is detested by those who have not always been poor ! How insupportable it seems to them, and how difficult it is, without becoming really renewed, to rise to all the loftiness, if I may so say, of such a position !

People wonder that a poor man should be proud ; but pray who should be so if not the poor ?

So many people have a mistaken notion of relationship between malignity and wit, that we are delighted to be able, from time to time, to contradict them by the example of wit and goodness united.

Goodness is not necessarily good-natured ; it may lack this charm or this perfection. And yet no goodness could be compatible with a complete absence of the elements of which good-nature is

composed ; the truly good-natured man is not so because he has humility of heart and a child-like spirit, but because these two features dominate in his goodness.

Politeness, which in itself is but an ingenious counterfeit of goodness, at certain given moments even carries the day over goodness itself ; and if you place in an elegant circle a good man who is only good, and a polite man who is only polite, there are ten chances to one that, in the same space of time, the last will seem very superior in goodness to the first.

It is dangerous for a sentiment to become a function ; and it is much to be feared, that when charity is turned into a profession, the profession may degenerate into a trade.

Every sensible man owes himself an account of his conduct ; but when this conduct compromises the repose, the estimation, and the well-being of his fellow-creatures, how bound is he to give himself an account, and a most rigid one, of the principles or the prejudices upon which he acts ! It would be but a slight inconvenience to make a mistake about our own rights, but to ignore or to interfere unwittingly with those of others, is a great misfortune, and, if our ignorance be voluntary, a great fault.

Those among moralists who describe much and well, bring souls nearer to us than do the moralists who preach ; and if these souls do not exactly reach the point we wish them to do, it is because

the only knowledge that has been given them is still incomplete. . . . The most skilful painter cannot represent all, because he has not seen all; the last depth of the soul, the last secret of the enigma, always escapes; the word *original sin* will never be pronounced by the human moralist, whence it will result, that one after the other, they will go on drawing ever nearer and nearer to the goal, but never reaching it.

Without denying that specifically moral writings may exercise an influence upon the morals of a nation, we still hold that the philosopher or moralist is much more under the authority of the people than the people are under his.

Morality is always popular, and to-day as ever; the people obeying the most noble of instincts, bring back all political questions to questions of morality.

Evil is to be presumed rather than good? What a deplorable and inhuman maxim! But even if it were true, in ten cases to one, we should try ten times to one to find it false, and never believe in evil except on evident proof and at the last extremity.

We are more profoundly humiliated by some absurdity we have fallen into than some sin we have committed, unless the sin involved an absurdity.

We have heard it said that it is the profile which gives the true character, and, so to speak, the fundamental and constant element of the human face. Nor is this true of the face only. It is in profile

that we receive the most living and individual impressions of many objects in the moral world. It is not in expounding, but in betraying his principles, that a man makes you best acquainted with them; and even those who are most free and candid in revealing their thoughts, are no exception to this rule.

An exquisite moral sentiment is alone capable of bestowing true refinement of manners; frequenting good society will hardly ever give its tone to those who were not born in it.

There are persons that we like merely because they are not good. It is true that in such a case we call them good-natured, to justify our liking them, for no one loves badness, as such. But this good-nature of theirs borders very closely upon worthlessness.

There are negative dispositions, boneless characters, whose good-nature consists in humouring all the world, in order to be humoured in return; in having no conviction for fear of running up against a contrary conviction; in never interfering on the side of justice, for fear of receiving, as says M. Jourdain, "some blow that might hurt one;" in "letting," according to the advice of one of the heroes of Rabelais, "the world go as it likes to go; in doing one's duty so-so; and in always speaking well of his reverence the prior."

Often, as is well known, we would rather say some harm of ourselves than not speak of ourselves at all, and this subtlety blends even with our humility; yes,

humility itself, till purified by God, is, properly speaking, nothing but a well-bred egotism.

The more we are constrained to hate ourselves, the more we hate what surrounds us. Our inward discontent is a gall that spreads over all objects. Here we may observe how powerfully the logic of the heart refutes that of the mind. Nothing could be more in accordance with this last than indulgence to the faults of which we know ourselves guilty. But if we look closely, we shall find that it is toward those very faults that we are inexorable; it is into these that we best penetrate, of which we best detect the secret play in our neighbour; we hate them in him with all the hatred that we spare them in ourselves; we snatch from our own breast, and turn against our brother, the very dart with which we have been pierced; we pursue, we punish our weaknesses in the person of others. Those who resemble us in character have got us, in spite of themselves, for confidants and judges of their most hidden movements, which we guess, prophesy, and announce beforehand; we discern the whole fault, with all its consequences, in its scarcely formed intention; and thus the discoveries that we have made in our own hearts lead us to make analogous ones in the hearts of others. It is more rarely that the observation of others helps us to know ourselves better.

Beloved objects are the light and beauty of the place where we dwell. In their absence it is no longer the same, so that without having moved we

have nevertheless experienced a change of place; without having taken a step, we are removed from what we loved.

It is to be powerful to be able to do much harm.

To hate is to kill; whoever hates kills in soul; and if he imagines on one hand that there is no happiness for him unless he kills, and on the other that he has the power to kill, be sure he will do so in fact.

The broken stones with which the roads are covered are first of all an obstacle, then a help; trodden into the earth by our footsteps and carriage-wheels, they consolidate it, and we walk on it more easily and safely. A hard life is a macadamised road which always remains firm, and never becomes muddy.

To listen only to one's passions and prejudices is the saddest of weaknesses and the greatest of misfortunes.

The angle of crime is open in every man; circumstances more or less prolong the sides of this angle.

An unmerited piece of praise is sometimes a lesson taught.

The worst part of bad actions is, that they make us worse.

When a man has a settled reputation, it is always better or worse than he deserves.

A false system has for accomplice whoever spares it by silence.

Those who cannot do that which is least can do

that which is greatest ; those who cannot walk, fly ; and one might say that the sublime is more within the reach of humanity than the mediocre.

One would be right in so saying, provided one added, that the mediocre is not on the way to the sublime, and that we do not pass through the one to reach the other. They are on two different lines, for the false can never be the first step to the true ; and in morals the sublime is the only true. In brief, all the world is not capable of being sentimental, and all the world is capable of being Christian. An intelligent and conscious communion with God, religious discernment, the choice of a belief, are within the resources of all. Here competence is not proportioned to culture and learning ; every one has sense enough to save himself ; in this career the ignorant themselves may serve as guides to the learned.

The force exercised upon opinion is sometimes in an inverse ratio to weight.

Imitation leads us to leave natural ways to enter into artificial ones ; it therefore makes slaves. But what else does singularity ? This man imitates others, because he wishes to please them ; that man separates himself from them, because he wishes to surprise. What difference does it make whether it be surprising or pleasing ? Under one form, as under the other, both men want to excite attention, to occupy the mind ; there is a want felt of others ; they do not suffice to themselves ; their own good opinion is not enough : without necessity, and unconsciously,

they play that part of actor, which they would shrink from under the professional form that gives it its name. They beg, either on their knees, or carrying their heads high, for the alms of admiration. Once act upon this principle, and it matters not whether you wish to please, to surprise, or even to displease. There is an end of independence. In all three cases, the man obeys those he seems to brave, rules his conduct, not according to principle, but opinion, seeks a motive out of self and out of truth. And he who in this point of view takes pains to displease his fellow-creatures, is so little above him who does all to please them, that on the whole the advantage remains with the latter. Both are alike in revolt against God, who claims to be our supreme object, and our only rule; both are servile, but the last is at least social, which the first is not. Will it be said that the best way to do right is to run counter to the multitude? It is true that the multitude goes wrong, but it does not thence follow that the spirit of contradiction is the principle of right; he does not do good who does not wish what is good; good is in the intention, the motives, the will; and the man of whom we speak has not willed nor pursued good, but vanity. He has willed what is evil; where then is his superiority over the man who has aimed at pleasing? Where then is the advantage of singularity over imitation?

Cunning, weak, and false go together.

We might construct the most exquisite morality

out of the exactions of each man as regards his neighbours, and the most lax morality out of his exactions as regards his own conduct.

Doing leads more surely to saying than saying to doing.

There are entails of moral wealth, and virtue too is a patrimony.

Facts and arguments all concur to prove that we more easily succeed in correcting a sentiment misled by a false appreciation of the object that excites it, than in giving birth in the soul to a sentiment entirely absent.

All pre-occupations that we do not share, and by which at the same time we are inconvenienced, may seem to us frivolous ; but it would be frivolous above all, not to see that it is right every one should treat seriously what seems to him of serious importance.

There are a thousand things in life which we accept, and yet are determined not to see.

Indignation, too, is a grand thing ; it is the explosion of the soul's most noble instinct. If the fountain gushes impetuously, the source remains the more limpid and wholesome.

II.—CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

1. *Its Character, its Principle ; and Human Morality (Virtue, Morality of Respectable People).*

The morality of Christians is not that of men of the world ; so little so, indeed, that those who un-

qualifiedly accept and faithfully observe it, form, in the midst of humanity at large, a race apart, a new humanity; so little so, that those who profess it are unintelligible to those who profess it not; and that the most commonplace life, provided it be Christian, never fails to reveal, in certain of its features, an extraordinary and mysterious principle, of which none know the name but such as possess it (Rev. xix. 12). However highly the capacity of the natural man be exalted, there are virtues that are only current among Christians, and sacrifices of which Christians alone are capable. Why is this? Because in their faith itself, that work of God, there is comprehended a sacrifice more profound and complete than any other, a sacrifice in which all others are by anticipation consummated. Because also the love that is born of faith is of all loves the deepest, most just, most inexhaustible, most immortal, and that for the very reason that all love finds its limits in the nature of its object: the love that has for its object God, would seek in vain for limits in its object, which has none.

While conceding to evangelical morality a decided superiority over all others, we call attention to the fact, that this superiority depends much less upon the nature of its precepts than on their basis, their motives; in other words, on the mysterious and divine facts which characterize Christianity as a positive religion. The gospel did not invent morality; some of its most beautiful maxims had been

long before in circulation: the gospel did not so much promulgate, as establish these upon a new basis, and quicken them with a new spirit; and the prerogative of this divine word is not so much that of announcing a new morality, as of giving power to practise the old.

For him who does not believe in God nothing is true in the moral world; and as Jesus Christ is the definitive and ultimate formula of faith in God, we may say with perfect truth that there is no moral certainty except in Christianity.

Christianity is the best of all moral systems, because it is something more. It does not address itself to reason, in the first place, but goes straight to the soul with all the power of a fact. It does not repeat the old arguments of all human morality,—arguments not only worn out, but, however skilfully employed, powerless from the first to regenerate one single heart: it brings with it a new fact, out of nature, above nature, and above reason.

The fundamental idea of all morality is laid in the expiatory sacrifice of the spotless Lamb; all the guiding lines of human life begin from the Cross, where justice and mercy have mutually satisfied each other. This fact, meditated on, analysed, contains the whole of morality.

Gratitude is the only evidently disinterested sentiment of which our actual nature is susceptible, and for this very reason it is qualified to become the fulcrum of our regeneration. The fact of redemp-

tion, by bestowing an extraordinary energy and an unlimited impetus to the most generous element of our being, has by that alone begun the work of our moral renewal. Next observe—and this is the essential point—that the property of gratitude or of love is to identify the soul which feels them with the object which has excited these feelings. Gratitude proportionates and assimilates us more or less to our benefactor; perfects us if he be pure, or, if he be not so, gradually degrades us. Gratitude, and such a gratitude, towards God, who is holy, leads us to be holy; how, moreover, can we be grateful for an expiation, without ceasing to love that which rendered this expiation necessary?

The gospel has simplified morality in giving to it, as centre, as object for all duties and aim for all life, the will of a God whose whole character it has revealed to us, and whom it makes us love by making us know him. The gospel has simplified the eye of the soul; that is to say, it has given to the glance of that eye a constant, fixed, and uniform direction; the Christian, if we may follow up the image, does not see double: duty presents itself to him in its simplicity; he has left off *seeking many inventions*.

For the Christian, in a word, all questions are more simple; the light that irradiates them is clearer; the gospel has, in a manner, popularized morality, and all that it contains of most high and most delicate.

The morality of the gospel is not the partial and gradual restoration of man. It does not add virtue to virtue till the frame be full ; but it throws into man's heart a new principle of life and action,—the love of God ; and as this expression, so easy to articulate, is the name of a moral fact, till then not only considered impossible, but actually so—it gives for principle to this principle, basis to this basis, a fact of incommensurable results ; of a nature at once mysterious and profoundly in agreement with our moral wants : a fact which alone orders the world, organizes chaos, and pacifies the soul ; it brings before us God himself becoming man for man's salvation, the only lever which could enter deeply enough into the soul, to shake, move, and displace life ;—shall I dare to say it?—a psychological discovery which belonged to God alone, and the application of which restores to him our will while subjugating our heart.

Christianity is radical in the highest degree ; radical in morals. It uproots one life and plants another. It is the only religion which is both in direct hostility with human nature in its fallen portion, and in harmony with that part of it which sin has not tainted ; the most human at once and least human of systems ; appearing at the same time to grant and to refuse us everything, and, in point of fact, granting all to the human, and refusing all to the sinful within us. Consequently, there is no religion that more thoroughly determines the moral being ; so that the whole, as regards life, lies in this—

whether we be Christian or not, or be so in one way or in another.

The starting-point of moral truth is this: Nothing is mine; I am worthy of nothing; I possess nothing but by the toleration of God; it is just and natural that I should be deprived of all; and my reasonable service, as the gospel expresses it, is to sacrifice myself.

Good in the human creature, is the intimate and deliberate union of the will of man with the will of God.

It is, no doubt, a power to believe in our own power; but it is a much greater power, in the majority of cases, and with regard to life as a whole, to believe in our own weakness, when, moreover, we believe in the power of another, ever ready to become ours if we desire it. Even in elect souls, power and resistance, will and duty, are very far from balancing each other; and our moral state is nothing but a permanent deficit. This truth, which is the first premiss of the gospel, has not, we consider, in any way enervated human morality; it has given to simple principles the character and value of powerful motives; it has balanced desires by other desires, hopes by other hopes.

It has provided us, so to speak, with a passion against our passions; and if it be objected that it is a perversion of the essence of morality to substitute *motives* for *principles*, we answer that under all possible systems we only act from the impulse of motives,

and that all motives are interests. It would be open to us to prove that there are no others so pure or so exalted as Christian motives.

Virtue, in ordinary morality, is but the means ; in the morality of the gospel it is the end.

Christian virtue has all its force, and exercises all its charm, only when, proceeding without any effort from the soul, it seems to form part of it, or at least to have become the most intimate and sweet of our affections.

The very persons that tax Christianity with misanthropy and exaggeration, when it proclaims the nothingness of human virtues, are often in practical life the most incredulous as to all virtue.

It is very rarely, at all events, that man reaches a point where virtue is nothing to him but pleasure. It was so in his state of innocence, before his will had detached itself from the divine will. It may indeed happen, that he who at the beginning of his Christian career only acquitted himself reluctantly of his duty, should come at a later period to fulfil it with delight ; but it is also possible, nay, it is more frequent, that to the last, duty will be in itself irksome, though agreeable to the sentiment of gratitude to God. Before the fall there was no obedience, properly so called ; no obedience, at least, which was self-conscious ; love absorbed all : the human soul moved in the communion of the divine. Now the idea and the feeling, duty and affection, are two distinct things. But the great aim of Christianity is

to unite us once more to God, to transform duty into sentiment, to teach us to love what we ought to do, and to do what we ought to love. Perfect harmony supposes two distinct beings, but so united that there is no longer any separation. Man of himself was incapable of recovering the lost harmony between duty and affection; the work of Jesus Christ was to re-establish it. His life and death have accomplished the mysterious union of law and feeling. By his example he has no doubt rendered the law more august; but it was not only for the promulgation of a new law that he came down to earth; he came there to present God to man under a new aspect, to make the latter understand that the true name of happiness is God, and that to love God is to love happiness. According to the beautiful expression of the Scriptures, Jesus has rendered the law of God perfect and *well-pleasing*. That it was perfect our reason told us, but it is only love that renders it *well-pleasing*. When I meet with a soul whose gratitude impels it to accomplish the divine will, a soul that acts because it loves, I repeat it, the law is not abolished for that soul; obedience, although easy and spontaneous, is nevertheless the fundamental element of virtue.

But among the sectarians of human morality, some refuse to give their heart, and will only obey; others will only love and refuse obedience. These are two equal errors, two halves of the truth; beautiful halves no doubt; but in morals, errors are the more danger-

ous the more nearly they approach to truth. A somewhat upright spirit is not likely to be deceived by gross errors ; there is much more danger of its being seduced by errors that are beautiful.

The necessity of being generally virtuous does not appear in the system of natural morality ; it may, I own, put forth a system more or less complete in the way of juxtaposition, but for all its completeness this system is not organically one ; ordinary morality reorganizes duties, not *duty*,—virtues, not *virtue*.

Obedience to God, I say to God immediately, is alone capable of producing *virtue*.

Social virtues, insisted on as ends by the ordinary moralist, are in the eyes of the Christian moralist only the development of internal virtue, the sign and manifestation of its presence in the soul. Human morality, in its most perfect state, is an ingenious mosaic which the least shock reduces into a heap of parti-coloured fragments ; Christian morality is the mighty pyramid, each part of which finds the same support in its immense base : immovable as the ground which bears it.

Is virtue a word or a thing, a fiction or a reality ? If it be a thing, a distinct reality, it must be one in its principle, *one* at its origin. If it have many principles, it is many things at once ; it is the factitious assemblage of several phenomena, to which a collective name has been given, and the intimate nature of which remains for that very reason inexplicable. We must necessarily admit that above filial piety, jus-

tice, benevolence, truth, chastity, there is something which is none of these in particular, and which yet embraces them all,—a principle in virtue of which we are not only dutiful sons, or just men, or benevolent, or true, or chaste, but all these at once, but *all that we ought to be* : a general force which should bend our souls to the moral order in all its extent, and make us love it in all its applications ; in a word, which creates in us not *virtues*, but *virtue*.

The man most distinguished by his character only derives from his conscience *virtues*, he does not derive *virtue* thence. The reason is, that *virtue* cannot be sought for less high than God, which is its only and supreme source. It is the love of God that is *virtue*.

Truth and virtue, that men attempt to divide, are in principle the same thing. Virtue, which is but the realization of our true relations with the Author of our being, necessarily supposes the knowledge of those relations. In order to fulfil the final end of his being, man must know it, and to do this he must know God. Cut the living bond through which virtue is connected, nourished, and satisfied with truth, and virtue becomes a mere moral instinct, very easy to pervert,—a vague tradition which, diluted with the thoughts of a corrupt heart, grows faint, discoloured, and is soon effaced.

There has grown up in the modern world, under the shadow of Christianity, a morality which, for all that, is not Christian, but yet has borrowed from Christianity some of its tenderness. An expression

of Quintilian may serve to characterize this morality : *Quod decet*, what is fitting.

The homage rendered to principles, as such, and prior to experience, is a thing which we may coldly respect, but which is, however, too rectilinear not to fail in good taste and grace. To observe, to analyse, to explain moral facts ; to discharge our obligations to the good and the right by a little irony turned best side out,—sometimes even by a burst of solemn indignation,—but never to appeal expressly to principles, and above all, to guard against laying them down : such is the method by which *respectable people* keep up appearances, when they have to pronounce upon a moral subject. No dogmatism, still less enthusiasm, a self-contained air, or rather an air of supreme indifference,—such is the quiet negative ritual on these occasions, of a writer who knows the world.

These respectable people : what sort of respectability is theirs, and to what does their morality reduce itself ? When you have subtracted from it natural affection, fear of the law, respect for public opinion, a remnant of tradition and habit, to what will the residue of more lofty principle amount ? Very little indeed !

2. *Love.*

(1.) Love in General : Its Definition, Essence, Principle ; Intelligence, Charity, Justice, Duty, Joy, Humility.

While we understand at the first glance that the life of the intellect is to think, it is not equally

evident that the life of the heart is to love. And yet it is certain, that if we recognise the life of the heart as a separate thing, not to be confounded with physical or intellectual life,—the moment we want to say in what this exclusive heart-life consists, we shall spontaneously and involuntarily name love. Each one may judge for himself whether it be possible to form any idea of a life of the heart into which the idea of love does not enter.

This life of the heart, then, if there be one, is love. And this life has two contrasts, or if you will, it is liable to two forms of death, of which the one is called selfishness, the other hatred. If the life of the heart be to love, the heart is dead when we love self only, and dead when we hate.

After all, what is it that raises the human soul to all the dignity that it is given it to reach? what is it that renders it, according to an apostle (2 Peter i. 4), “partaker of the divine nature?” It is not joy, but love.

Man, made to love,—man, of whom love is the destiny,—may think, may feel in vain; if he loves not, he does not live.

The true empire is that of thought; the true power is to be loved; and the true, the only sovereign is the one whom we love.

The true reward of loving is to love yet more.

The true wealth of life is affection; its true poverty, selfishness. We live in proportion as we love; egoism is a consumption, a death, a suicide. Who do

you see serene and happy here below, but those who have transported their lives beyond the boundary of self? Who do you see discontented, gloomy, life-weary, but such as think only of themselves? The most profound *ennui* is that of egotism. *Ennui* has indeed no other principle; in order to avoid it we must, in default of persons, at least love ideas; we must overflow, communicate, get out of self. It is only in the contact of soul with soul that we can live fully; all other life is but a death, and the movements it occasions are the shocks that galvanism gives to a corpse.

One is never weary when one loves. Love is fullness in the void, and Christian sadness has nothing in common with the disgust of life.

The place of charity, like that of God, is everywhere; and one might as well say that a sunbeam is dirtied by falling upon impurities, as imagine that Jesus Christ can be sullied, even in the opinion of man, by any society whatever. Nay, had it been possible that he should lose any of his adorable purity, would this not have happened first and once for all by *his* mingling with men at all?

There are only two principles for the soul, both always active and encroaching: selfishness and charity. The one must grow and the other diminish; the one only grows rich by the spoils of the other. Between these two tendencies which solicit it, the soul cannot find neutral ground to rest in, it must incline to the one or the other. Hence it results that

even in not acting it acts, and that by the very fact that it does not labour for charity,—it does so for selfishness. This may explain to you why simple inaction as regards the afflicted is not only criminal but deteriorating, and how the first punishment that befalls him who leaves good undone is to be less and less capable of doing it.

We may enjoy, act, know too much ; it is impossible to love too well ; this pretended exaggeration is the soul of all great actions, the motive of all beautiful lives. Enthusiasm for what is good and great is the noblest condition the heart can know, a disposition in which it were well if it could continually abide. Even fanaticism has its grandeur ; and whether we kindle for country, science, or the beauties of art and nature, we by that transport do honour to human nature, which gravitates but too easily towards common things and material interests.

To love is to devote one's-self, and martyrdom was ever the crown and the seal of a sublime affection.

Charity involves as its basis the sacrifice of that very principle within us which opposes itself to sacrifices : the general consecration of our will and our whole being to the glory of God and the good of men ; a vow which binds us more strictly to these two aims than the vow of the religious binds him to the altar, and that of the wife to her husband. In a word, charity is for the Christian the reason, the aim, the object, the interest of life.

We might define charity to be a disposition or a principle which renders us servants the one of the other ; and it would not only be a religious maxim that we thus expressed, but the principle and condition of social virtue that we laid down. This seems at first sight a paradox, but it is only the truth. If man in his social character does not adopt perfection for principle, he will never have a fixed and constant one.

Love is the sovereign good ; it is therefore the sovereign consolation in misfortune ; and it is love, even more than faith, that gives to our lamp its most brilliant and living jet of light.

Silence, meditation, a view of heaven, a serious and austere life, are all needed in order *to love* ; we must have learnt to hate ourselves before we can love duty. Tenderness of soul is proportioned to its strength, and its strength to its renunciation.

Charity does not detach itself from the facts that gave it birth ; and with it we must accept those facts, that is to say, the whole of Christianity.

What a difference, had J. J. Rousseau but grasped with the heart what he conceived with his mind ; if system in him had risen to affection ; if he had loved what he believed ! It is this indeed which is the whole secret of moral unity ; and it is for this reason that the divine Founder of Christianity has undertaken, by means exclusively his own, to make us love what he would have us believe.

Much love cannot exist without a little anxiety ;

and perhaps we do not love enough when we do not allow ourselves to feel such anxiety.

If there be nothing less individual, nothing more destructive of individuality than formulas, as such, nothing on the other hand is more individualizing than love when it governs and determines all.

The beings that consent not to be loved are the most sublime or most degraded in the scale of moral being: the most sublime, if they hold that after having rebelled against his Creator, man is unworthy to be loved by any creature; the most degraded, if all desire for love has come to be extinct within them.

Nothing that is according to nature will endure, for nature is but one form of God's thought. Of that which is according to the Spirit nothing will pass away, for the Spirit is God himself. "Love," says the apostle, "never faileth;" but he speaks concerning spiritual love. We might indeed conceive of charity preserving our other affections; amber preserves the bit of sea-weed round which it has formed; but we could not conceive that bit of weed, worldly love, enduring of itself.

To love spiritually is to love as God loves and desires to be loved. All that in love is nature, instinct, taste, self-pleasing only—all that in love is adapted to the image of the world and of time,—disappears or subordinates itself. Love, purified and divinized, rises and attaches itself to what is invisible and immortal; it becomes at once more tender and more holy, more intimate and more reverential; it

loves God in every human soul, it loves every soul in God. The believer who sees all things with God's eyes, loves, if I may so speak, with the very heart of God.

There is no place in eternity for the sweetest and purest attachments, if the grace of God have not transformed them from terrestrial affections to spiritual and heavenly.

Ask the first comer amongst the simplest class of men, and he will tell you at once that it is much better to be intelligent than handsome, much better to be good than intelligent. Matter and form are far below knowledge, and knowledge cannot be paralleled with love.

It is not even enough to contrast with a whole life of thought a whole life of love ; these things are not to be measured thus. Quantity, extension, duration, go for nothing here ; the nature is all. All the sublimest thoughts of profoundest philosophers, in all ages of the world, are not worth, do not counter-balance, one single movement of charity. And if it be objected to us that great thoughts come from the heart, that there are things that can only reach the mind by the soul, and that there may be perhaps some love in some of the speculations of these lofty intellects, we are far from contradicting it ; and we rejoice to carry over to the credit of their higher and true life whatever of love there may have been in their thought ; but we do not the less maintain, that in those beautiful thoughts in which there is life, it is the love that makes the life ; that thought,

as thought, is not life ; that the ignorant man who loves, excels in dignity the learned man who loves not, and that a single act, a single impulse of true love, surpasses the whole aggregate of most brilliant discoveries and sublime ideas.

Truth, no doubt, is a great thing ; but if you do not place truth above love, if consequently you place it below, you may as well say that without love truth is useless ; nay, go further, and say boldly, that without love there is no truth, since there is no unity and no happiness. This surprises you ; but reflect a little : the word *truth* does not only designate an idea ; it is of a more substantial character ; it designates also a thing, a fact, a relation. Truth finds itself in actions before it finds itself in ideas ; it is in things before it is in words. A thing is true when it is what it ought to be, as a word is true when it says what it ought to say ; and similarly, a thing is false when it is not what it ought to be. If, therefore, man is not what he ought, does not what he ought, it is in vain that he may know the truth, he will not be in the truth, according to that idea of St. John, who says that by this we know that we are in the truth, if we love our brethren. Truth in the creation of God, consists in the correspondence of all things ; now he who does not love, by infringing that general correspondence or harmony which is truth, introduces, so far as it lies in his power, falsehood into the midst of truth. There is therefore no room for drawing a distinction, and saying that

man has not love but he has truth. Not so; if he loves not, he has not truth.

Reason finds it very difficult to represent to itself charity without joy; but it is far more difficult to the conscience to admit as legitimate, or even as possible, in the long-run, joy without charity.

Whosoever is not charitable is not just either; not only because charity is justice, but because it is only charity that can make us discover what is just.

Affection will not keep all it promises unless it be sustained by duty, and it will leave fallow many parts of that field which it hopes to cultivate.

From injustice to charity, from charity to injustice, there is no halting-place, no fixed station. We slide necessarily into injustice unless we gravitate towards charity.

True charity only penetrates into the heart through the openings, the chinks, so to speak, that humility has made; and if you are hard as you were before, it is a proof that you are proud as you were before.

Alternately the principle each of the other, love and humility cannot exist separately in the soul.

He who loves finds no difficulty in humbling himself; he who does not humble himself does not love.

(2.) Love of God: not natural; what it is.—Liberty.—Self-love. Its apologetic value.—Principle of the New Covenant.

The love of God, if you understand by it a real, earnest, controlling love, is not natural to the heart of man.

He who begins to love God is the first to be appalled at his indifference to God.

Love, the true love of God, is the love of his truth, of his holiness, of his whole will; the true love is that which reflects itself in obedience; the true love is that which stirs and purifies the conscience.

If we did not love God, who is holiness itself, we should not love holiness nor God's law, since the love of God has no meaning, and is only an empty word, if we do not love that which is essential to God and constitutes him God. It is therefore an irreversible condition of the happiness that religion gives to dispose us to love and holiness.

If you do not love God you have no relation with him but that of fear; but fear is not a relation, quite the reverse; it does not unite, it separates. And if the end of God in giving a religion to men be to reunite them to himself—if the very name of *religion* expresses this—it is above all necessary that the relation of love should be established between men and him, and no works that men may do outside of this relation are the works of God.

If there were nothing but a sentiment of legal righteousness in the heart of the Christian, he would seek to measure out his task, would trace himself out exact limits, would know when to stop short; but obeying because he loves, loving Him whom there is no loving too much, he gives himself up to the impulse of his heart, as the man of the world gives himself up to his passions.

The man who knows himself, and, in spite of his worthlessness, feels himself loved by God, loved unconditionally and for ever,—who even in privations and afflictions discerns only proofs of love,—that man has obtained everything; if he forms any desire, it is according to God, and with the hope of receiving better than he desires.

The love of God will endow you with a new sense, with a certain and delicate tact, by means of which you will easily recognise the works that please him, and those on which he will not look; for all activities are not good. This is the first effect of the love of God, but there is another: it gives a greater liberty to the soul, and renders lawful a number of works which would not have been so without it.

So long as man does not love, he will not feel himself free in his relation with God, and will not be so.

We bestow the name of *motive* on what gives to the soul impulse and power to act. There are two classes of motives in human morality, the first are connected with fear and hope, coarse motives no doubt, but we must recognise their importance in the actual state of society. From a higher point of view, however, one could never found a morality worthy of the name solely on hope and fear, for these would but make us slaves or egotists. Man, in his quality of moral individuality, imperatively demands a deep interest, an interest of continuous duration, which shall lay hold of his whole heart.

Every true doctrine, every religion deserving the name, should furnish him with this. This living force is complete only in love ; love on the part of him who claims obedience, love on the part of him who renders it. Pure love in God, pure love in man, such is in itself and in its essence the only motive worthy of religion and worthy of man, had he remained in his pristine state. God is not a human legislator ; he is the spiritual Being who demands the adoration of the heart, a worship in spirit and in truth, produced and fed by love. It is to this end that Jesus Christ restores in man the divine image, effaced by sin and rehabilitated by love alone. Fear and hope concur, no doubt, in the work, as necessary and preparatory levers, but they (the former at least) have hardly more than a provisional action, in the absence or the weakness of the great motive power, love ; which, by the way, will only be perfect in man in a new dispensation.

To love God is to love both the life he has created and the death he has ordained. To love God is to have found the secret of living.

The love of God is the only passion made to agree with the perfectionment of our soul, the only sentiment to which it is permitted to be exclusive and illimitable. Life has unity solely through a sentiment that entirely penetrates and determines it, as heat does the bodies submitted to its influence. Every man who gives as sole basis to his life a thought, whose system has for its root only an idea,

will always be somewhat stiff, cold, and incomplete. But when love takes possession of the life of the Christian, that life rises and develops itself with the majestic unity of a temple consecrated to the Lord.

He, who having recollected himself, and risen by degrees above the impressions of the world, sees nothing intervene between himself and the thought of God,—is forced to acknowledge that nothing is more wise than this so-called foolishness, nothing more natural than this violence done to nature, nothing more according to our interest than this renunciation; and, in short, as it has been excellently said, that the love of God is the common-sense of self-love. And not only so, but even in the actual state of society, and from its decidedly limited point of view, nothing is more social than Christianity, and indeed all other things are much less so.

The love of God is at once the culmination and the annihilation of the *me*. A lively sense of happiness, an indefinite power of renunciation, combine to form its essential character. To obey God is the supreme duty, but the supreme felicity as well. To love is at once to give all and to have all; we give our hearts, but the reward of that gift lies in the gift itself; and the sacrifice of the *me*, in this mysterious state of the soul, is itself the delight of the *me*.

Everything for God and nothing for me: such is the motto of love. Everything for God, provided God be mine.

Does he who loves God deceive himself? Is he not in the truth? And if Christianity alone gives power to love him, must not Christianity be exclusively true?

Love is the principle of the New Covenant. Love, in that new race that God has made in his own image, is the principle of obedience, the supreme law, the spirit of all laws. Everything in this dispensation is stamped with love.

(3.) Of Men.—Duty of Mercy; Pardon of Offences; Value of Christian Activity; Christian Beneficence.

The time has not come, methinks, for ceasing to treat among Christians of the duty of mercy, and that of intercession, which is so closely connected with it. I believe, I feel, that bitterness is always ready to break bounds in the heart of man; it flows freely in the channel that indignation scoops out for it. One must have been a long while in the school and the company of Jesus Christ, one must have learned from him to tread many things under foot, one must, seated by his side, be able to look down from a great height on the interests and agitations of this life, to run no longer any risk of self-deception, and of indulging hatred under the form of indignation.

With regard to all those whose opinions, views, and conduct are in opposition to our interests or our principles, how little the impatience they occasion differs from hatred! Our personal enemies often inspire us with less.

The gospel approves neither hatred nor disputations. Not that it authorizes a cowardly indifference, not that indignation is not as becoming in the Christian as in Jesus himself, when the terrible epithets of *hypocrites* and *fools* issued from his divine lips; not but what we must loudly defend justice and truth, and spiritually become the adversary of their adversaries. But the wrath of man, and the spirit of disputation infused by pride, have no share in such noble combats. Zeal, courage, perseverance, indignation even,—all must be permeated with charity, or rather, all must be charity. Prayer and indignation must gush from one source, the first from the love of God, the second from the love of men, and thus both alike from love.

Charity has sometimes harshness for its true expression. Gentleness may be treachery. There may be love in vehemence and indignation.

In order truly to pardon, we must do more than pardon. Evil must be overcome with good, and, according to the example set by God himself, where sin abounded grace must much more abound.

If we have been able to pardon him who has offended us, we shall be able also to pray for him; if we cannot pray for him we have not pardoned him.

We have such a craving for love and esteem, that the thought of one single being that refuses us these, is to our soul a gnawing worm, comparable to that of remorse. But when we have prayed for the man who dislikes us, he no longer seems the same; he is

no longer our enemy, but our *protégé*; and as it is natural to attach ourselves to the good we do, the thought of that man thenceforth pleasantly occupies our mind; we take pleasure in cultivating that first benefit, and consolidating it by fresh prayers.

It is not according to what we have done (to take the word in its material sense) that we shall be judged, but what we have willed, or, in other words, what we have done internally, according to the actions of our soul; for it is not said that we shall receive that done *with* the body, but that done *in* the body. Our external actions will then figure as symbols and witnesses.

It matters little that we yield to God in a thousand points, if we resist him in one. One single premeditated or voluntary act of disobedience effaces all our obedience.

We are not out of the pale of communion with God because we have violated this or that, or a certain number of his commandments; but rather we violated them because we were out of that communion; and the different sins we commit are but manifestations or effects of that wound of sin ceaselessly open and bleeding within us.

To the sight and mind of the Lord there is no little sin; and a transient movement of malignity or pride traversing the heart of one of those pitiless judges of the woman taken in adultery, may have sullied him more in the eyes of Christ than the actual offence of that unfortunate.

It is not a few good works, it is not a punctilious virtue laboriously studied, laboriously imitated, that will qualify you for heaven.

The impartiality of God attaches itself to the principle of actions; it is by these principles that he judges them; and from this point of view he may not always inflict a more severe sentence of reprobation upon the crimes that appal us than upon the faults that scarcely incur our blame.

Do not let us distinguish between what we can and cannot do, for if there is anything above our power, all is above it; and if there is anything within our power, then everything is within it. Let us openly and boldly affirm that man can do nothing, and can do everything: nothing without God, everything with him. The whole morality of the gospel rests on these two bases.

Christianity does not consist in not willing; quite the reverse. Christianity simply aims at giving us a will in accordance with that of God, and strengthening it ever more and more in that direction.

God will have us entirely and altogether his; he wills that our whole natural life should enter into that spiritual life of which faith is the principle; and to profane, or merely to leave unemployed any one of the faculties he places at our disposal, is a robbery.

The Christian has not a nature to follow, but to subdue; he has not only to do what pleases the

world, but sometimes what displeases it; not to fulfil his duties, but to go beyond them; not to reach certain limits, but to surpass all limits.

Perfection in doctrine and morality cannot be the portion of all. Some particular errors, some imperfections in details, do not prevent a man being essentially in the right way. In all things there is a progressive advance, the necessity of which there is no evading; we cannot, in a general way, arrive at once at what is best in theory and practice, and all that man can reasonably exact from man is to follow the road that leads thither.

God has desired to establish in our life a perfect and unalterable unity; out of the two principles of which man is composed to make one single being; not to destroy one activity for the sake of the other, but to give to both one single aim, and to the whole of life one only signification; not, in short, to kill man, but to regenerate him.

If there be a law abundantly confirmed by experience, it is, that the more good we do, the more pleasure we find in doing it. One single spark, if it do not get put out, if it finds anything to fasten on, may kindle the whole of life. There is in every act of beneficence something so conformable to our nature, or so worthy of it; the soul feels so much at ease in the atmosphere of charity, that in proportion as it breathes that air it repudiates all others. There is a joy in doing right, a joy keen in proportion as it was unpremeditated, and that in order to

procure it we have overcome the strongest resistance from nature and the senses. . . . This is why the pleasures of charity, if it be permitted to call them such, never wither ; one lives in the soul of others, one unites one's-self to all their impressions. The more self-sacrifice this happiness imposes, the dearer it becomes ; we love it for its own sake and for what it has cost us. Thus the first of duties becomes the most profound of instincts ; it blends with the love we bear ourselves ; we no longer distinguish between the two, and our soul in each of its movements tends entirely in one direction, and leaves nothing of itself behind.

Time to do good is never to be merely found ; it is charity that must create it : selfishness has no leisure. Time is not composed of hours and minutes alone, but of love and will : we have little time when we have little love.

Must we admit it ? There are few even amongst the best who do all they ought, and few, too, who know all they might. We have always at a given moment something that another has not. . . . He whose very existence depends upon the charity of others, may by a fervent prayer pay back to his benefactors far more than he has received.

The most fertile soil is not that which produces most ; the men most favoured in regard to intelligence or fortune are not those who do the most good. Whether you look at the quality or the quantity of actions, we must place to the credit of

the poor and the lowly the greatest part of the good which gets done on earth.

One must be without conscience and without compassion not to confess that there is a terrible waste of time in the world, if that be time wasted which, lawfully destined to charity, is voluntarily diverted from so holy a use.

The most occupied man is the one who has most time, and whom we most easily find at our disposal.

In doing good we always do more good than we suppose, and in doing ill more harm.

Woe to him who does not impute to himself all the results his conduct has not, but might have had ; and who does not feel, with regard to such results, if less of grief, equal repentance, and even more confusion.

Beneficence, like every other virtue, like conversion itself, must never say *to-morrow*.

Let us not be deceived by appearances. Circumstances, manners, and customs repress us, but in each one of us there is the germ of a tyrant. In making ourselves the equals of our sovereign we have made ourselves, in as far as we could, the masters of our fellows. How dethrone this tyrant ? There is one way : it is to constitute ourselves, in a spirit of charity, servants to all our brethren.

People still insist upon confounding charity with almsgiving. It is difficult to believe that such an error can be involuntary. It is really an attack upon charity, because charity is Christianity. The

love of man for the love of God, the love of the soul of man in man; the humble love that willingly makes itself small and annihilates itself; love, in short, springing from the mystery of the cross; love such as this, despite the generally acknowledged sweetness of some of its fruits, has characteristics which suit neither the pride of our hopes nor the loftiness of our schemes, and tend to impede the development of the *humanitarian* cause. Here lies the secret of the pertinacious error.

The faculty of loving each man, simply because he is man, is in itself more elevated and excellent than all our special and particular affections.

Without love for man as man, all our individual affections, whether of family, country, or sympathy, would not raise us above animals, and each of these special affections only deserves the holy name of love, when, being perfected by the Spirit of God, it has become charity.

Humanity suffers and groans; we must, at least, groan and suffer with it. We must pray for it; we must share that travailing in birth which convulses and rends it, for it aims at nothing less than the bringing forth a new world to God.

Every Christian belongs to all men. He has not the same duties to all, but he is under obligations to all. He is not a Christian, he has not comprehended Jesus Christ, if this idea be a new one, or rather, if he be not habitually pre-occupied with it. He is not only separately to love each member of the human

race that circumstances may bring into contact with him; he is, like Jesus Christ, to love humanity. This is the work and the glory of the true Christian.

An expanded heart is the one which can hold the most sentiments. When we make use of this image, we mean that there is nothing positive for the heart but love, for it is said that hate contracts it, and yet hate is a sentiment.

3. Moral Studies.

Readiness to Judge; Resignation; Casuistry; Pleasures; Intimacy springing from Christianity; Rational Character of the Christian Life; Sacred and Profane; Glory of God; Purity; Co-operation in undertakings not Christian; Patience, Humility, Fear; Individual and Social Vices.

To condemn our brother without reason, proof, or reflection, is what we each one of us do almost as soon as we are capable of thinking, and almost at every moment of the day. And if this be the case, must we not believe this sin connected with what is most essential in our original corruption, and one of its most direct and close consequences?

A habit of rash and ill-natured judgment shows more than anything else that the soul is not born into the new life, the life of God. It announces that the two principles of life, humility and charity, are still foreign to it.

The coarsest have a very delicate conscience when it comes to judging their neighbours.

In confessing, as we needs must, that unfavourable

judgments form the groundwork of conversations in general, how can we help concluding that men find their interest or their pleasure therein, and consequently that they are not impartial?

A universal distrust, that politeness can but ill disguise, or of which politeness is the fruit, is become the watchword of society. It is a general condition, patent to observation. Can you therefore maintain man to be an impartial judge of man?

In what cases is it allowable to pass judgment? In those where to be silent would involve an offence against the glory of God, or an injustice to our neighbour. In such cases, provided we speak in our own name, there is courage and Christian generosity in clearly expressing the opinion we hold of our brothers, even when it is very unfavourable, and calculated to prejudice others against them.

The judgment forbidden by God's law is one that we pass upon the motives of the actions of our fellow-creatures, or on their situation before God; without charity or the zeal for God's glory in any way impelling us thereto.

Before we judge like God, let us see as He does whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity. Then, humbled by the evil we shall discover in ourselves, then, calling corruption what hitherto we have called slight imperfection, we shall feel that we have something better to do than to spy with curious eye the secret sentiments of our neighbour's heart.

The faculty of restraining our judgments within

the boundaries of truth, is one of the privileges of every existence that is normal and concentrated in duty.

Nothing less philosophical than the contempt of Christian resignation, for the time to resign one's-self must come ; and the men of this generation must, at all events, resign themselves not to see the era when we shall no longer be sick, no longer die, or, no less marvellous fact, no longer feel *ennui* ! And so soon as resignation is admitted to be a necessity, what resignation, we ask, can be more noble than that which is derived from Christianity alone ? What more noble, in fact, than its ingredients : confidence, obedience, love ? Can this resignation degrade or enervate us, as is pretended, since it never excludes action where action is possible and lawful, and exercises the most valuable of our energies—energies of which the moral being finds the principle in himself ? That it moreover produces contentment, and through contentment repose ; that thus religion, which would not be true did it not inspire us with contraries,—alternately excites and tempers, calms and animates, impels and subdues, admits of no doubt whatever ; and what better effect, we ask, can society desire ?

Resignation is the voluntary act of a strong and tender soul, which remits with confidence into the hands of the Supreme Dispenser the gifts received from him, and by this spontaneous acquiescence imprints on the accidents of fortune and the losses

of life, the character of a sacrifice, and the merit of an offering.

Resignation is the courage of Christian sorrow.

If we were perfectly united with our Head there would be no cases of conscience ; as it is, every one encounters them,—some very difficult, very doubtful, even with the help of prayer.

The first symptom of disloyalty, the first presage of disobedience, is to consult when we already know what we ought to do.

The weakest support is strong enough when we wish to sin. However attached we may in general be to our own views, we become modestly full of deference for the opinions that please us ; we exaggerate at will the worth of the person who counsels us, or the importance of the fact that determines us. We want nothing more, but we cannot do with less. If it be difficult to resolve to do well all alone, it is no less so to resolve all alone to do evil. We are bent upon having a man, a reason, a proof, a sign on our side ; and since, in point of fact, nothing is easier to find, we consult, although conscience has spoken out clearly enough, and although passion has already made up its mind.

We act inconsiderately and insincerely when, before we have exhausted all other means, and sounded our hearts before God ; we consult those mute oracles, which, as they say nothing, say everything ; and which, consequently, we may interpret just as we like : I mean those signs, those meetings, those pretended

calls, and vague impressions, that we style internal voices, and in which, if worldly men brought them forward in similar cases, we should discern nothing but natural sympathies or antipathies unworthy of being taken into consideration ; amidst which expedients, I include without hesitation the way of turning God's Word into a mere lottery, by fixing upon a text at random. When this is done, it is no longer God's, but a human word, found, or rather placed, by us in the sacred volume.

It is our conscience that must appreciate the advice given to us, and pronounce the final sentence. This is a right, or rather a trust, that we can never get rid of in favour of any other ; powers that we could only abdicate into God's hands if he made his voice distinctly heard by us, and even that relinquishment of conscience would be a conscientious act. The advice of others may assist us in reducing a complex question to simple terms, it may, too, reinstate in pristine brightness principles of conscience that passion had darkened within us ; it may make us come to ourselves ; but observe this expression, which I have not invented, and which you use daily : if to *come to ourselves* be to come back to the truth, this is because we have in ourselves a witness and a judge of the true, and that it suffices to return into his presence, and to endure his close scrutiny, to replace ourselves in the way of truth and justice.

He who is seriously bent upon arriving at a given

end, is in little danger of missing the way ; nay, he will but seldom even hesitate, for conscience, generally speaking, speaks distinctly enough to whoever will listen to it.

The Christian may be undecided upon a thousand subjects ; he is never so long with regard to duty. His road may be rough and precipitous perhaps, but it is direct. He prefers on his way to eternity to wound rather than lose himself.

We may always be easy as to the results of a sincere inquiry ; to have sought God's will is to have found it, and to him who has done all he could to enlighten himself, error is imputed as truth.

The general will of God is clearly revealed in his Word ; his Spirit, when invoked, interprets it to your conscience ; and to will once for all what God wills, to give his will as end and inspiration to our whole life, to subordinate all our measures to that one thought, is enough to light up gradually all the obscurities of our way,—enough to solve beforehand almost all the problems that may propose themselves to us ; enough to replace and annul the science of casuists.

Let us remember that we must ourselves be very authentically out of the world, to succeed in an attempt to win others away from it. We are not out of the world because we have given up noisy pleasure ; we have simply passed from one hemisphere to another ; we have entered the domain of purer and higher enjoyment. A whole life is sometimes necessary to prove that we no more belong to the

world, and to enable us to exercise a spiritual influence on others.

Let us, above all, never forget that if we want to lead any one to give up a satisfaction of any kind, we must offer him some other in exchange ; and this other must be so superior as to render hesitation impossible. Never did simple arguments persuade any man to renounce the world. However incontestable their clearness, such evidence would only irritate. It is lost labour to tell men that the pleasures of the world are transitory and endanger their salvation ; we must have something to give them in lieu of what we take away. Without this condition all arguments sound hollow. When God designed to snatch man from under the dominion of sin, he did not limit himself to promulgating his law, he manifested his grace ; and hearts touched by this divine attraction found themselves freed from that of worldly joys.

First make true Christians ; after that you will easily obtain the relinquishment of certain pleasures.

There is no community of position, thought, and hope on earth, which can create so profound an intimacy, so thorough a mutual understanding, so blend soul with soul, and make confidence so free and complete as a common faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour.

The men who have been able to seize the true spirit of Christianity are of all others those who lead the most rational life. Do not let us be surprised at this ; let us remember that the nature against which

the gospel protests is the moral state in which we are born, by reason of the fall. But there is another nature, a primitive nature, to which the gospel renders homage, and of which, by the mouth of St. Paul, it deploras the extinction, when speaking of those "*without natural affection.*" This nature consists in the true relation of things. It must therefore be found once more when the first of all relations is acknowledged and respected. And this is the effect of Christianity ; hence a life animated by the spirit of the gospel will be the most natural of all.

For those to whom religion is not all in all, there are in point of fact two spheres, the religious and the profane ; but for the Christian nothing is profane, everything tends to holiness.

God does not precisely will to have glory ; he has without willing it all the glory that belongs to him ; but he wills, which is a different thing, that we should render him glory ; and as we can only do this by our sanctification, he wills our sanctification ; this is expressly his will concerning us.

People have a habit of attaching to the word *purity* a sort of quite negative idea. According to the common interpretation, it implies a simple exemption from defilement, the absence of a fault rather than the presence of a quality ; but in morals, purity no more consists in this than does happiness in an exemption from suffering ; and just as we are positively happy only in so far as suffering is replaced by enjoyment ; so we

are only really pure in so far as defects have given place to qualities.

Nothing prevents a Christian from co-operating Christianly in undertakings where the concurrence of others is given in another spirit. Their intention has no power over his. And even where he finds himself unable to stamp on the work in hand the divine impress of the gospel, he has it, at all events, more or less in his power to introduce many elements which but for him might not have any part in that work, as for instance, moderation, simplicity, patience. It would be difficult to lay down rules and limits here, but we may safely trust them to the candid and delicate spirit, the religious tact of the true disciples of Jesus Christ; they have One to refer the matter to, and will be sure to know where they may lend a helping hand, and whence they must withdraw it.

That which is most wanting to believers, wanting indeed to the majority of men, and the absence of which nullifies the fairest hopes and explains so many reverses, is patience.

One is not a Christian, one has not comprehended Christianity, unless one is disposed to claim the lowest place as eagerly as the highest is claimed in worldly society; not to do this, is to forget that Jesus Christ came into the world not to be ministered to but to minister; that he washed the feet of his disciples, and wills that we should do likewise.

Fear is not a virtue, since perfect love is destined

to cast it out (1 John iv. 18). It has been said that all our courage may be referred to fear ; but this is not true of Christian courage, which is a hope.

If Christian morality be impracticable, we must not call it beautiful, for nothing is beautiful but truth ; if therefore it be true, it is practicable, in this sense, that none of its precepts are absolutely above the reach of the man armed with the armour of God ; and more especially in this sense, that the spirit of this law becomes without reserve or restriction the spirit of the believer, on whom God not only imposes it, but with whom he assimilates and incorporates it by the power of love.

We may refute errors, but never passions.

Of people who give there is no lack ; of those who yield, I mean who yield as Christians, submitting themselves to each other in the fear of God, there are very few.

Generally speaking, we judge those faults or vices which directly injure society much more severely than those from which only individuals seem to suffer, because we proceed from the point of view of the general interest, in which ours is comprehended. Most men, in that narrow cause which is at bottom that of their own self, fail to reflect that, from the point of view of the gospel, a simple act of selfishness may be found much more serious than a theft, for it contains the germ of all crimes, and it has not the excuse of material necessity.

III.—EDIFICATION AND CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1. *Happiness; Unhappiness; Murmurings; Trials; Pain and Sadness; Joy and Sadness.*

We must shake off a certain prejudice, which is itself a consequence of sin; I mean the prejudice which prevents our seeing order except where we see happiness; and which even goes so far as to make us believe in order wherever happiness, or the appearance of happiness, meets our eyes. It is not thus that the Scriptures judge. They present us with suffering as being an accidental form of order, as the order extant in moral disorder.

Our irreligion, which is only the highest form of our selfishness, will only recognise order there where our egotism finds means of satisfaction and earnestness of security. This is to reverse the terms of a true proposition; for it is very true that order is happiness, but not true that happiness is order; and it is certain that happiness in sin, that is to say, in disorder, would only be an additional disorder.

Happiness is not a fruit of our nature, and does not grow spontaneously on the stem of life; it must needs be grafted there by a divine hand.

Happiness is proportioned to holiness; happiness is only holiness; and all that is lacking to holiness, that is to say, to obedience and love, is so much subtracted from happiness, so much curtailed from salvation.

Happiness is the sentiment of internal harmony. This sentiment is not a negative thing. When all the parts of being and of life, the soul and destiny, the visible and invisible, the finite and the infinite, blend in love, and, as it were, kiss each other, there is in the depths of a man's heart a thrill of joy, the prolongation, the continuity of which, may justly be called happiness. .

This harmonious and profound life, which is the very essence of true felicity, supposes in the soul the presence of the true and only principle of moral unity, which is God. This presence in the soul constitutes, if one may so speak, the logical state.

We must, before all, love God ; and this does not depend upon us, because it does not depend upon us to love an object in which we do not find our happiness. Let God manifest himself to us, in the first instance, as the sovereign happiness, and not only as the sovereign perfection and sovereign law. Even then, a great number will not, it may be, love him, but it is at least certain that, before knowing him in this character, not one will love him, whereas, if among men there be one capable of love, he will love from that moment, or never.

In life such as it is made, the light of our darkness, the happiness of our unhappiness, consists in a faith founded upon God himself, in a hope that depends upon him, in a love that ascends to him, to re-descend thence upon humanity and embrace it as a whole.

The condition of man is in great part, and even entirely, what he wills it to be ; given the same circumstances in other respects. Both the happiness and unhappiness of man are from within. According to what he himself is, the events that concern him remain what they are, or transform themselves ; nay, we may even say they are or are not. Everything is nothing ; nothing becomes everything ; little suffices when little contents.

Nothing is happy or unhappy in itself ; the heart makes the value and the significance of all ; and, sinners as we are, prosperity suits us ill, security is the greatest of our dangers.

All sensible men have agreed, that if happiness come not to us from within, it will come to us from nowhere ; and it would be superfluous to seek to prove, even to the blindest among us, that external objects may indeed procure us enjoyments, but do not bring happiness with them.

Always to have to avoid one's-self,—is this not the most profound misfortune ?

We are only happy in proportion as we can live with ourselves, as we are comfortable at home,—that is to say, in our own soul. He who keeps constantly outside it, who does not enter in there, or does so only with reluctance, he, even though habitually serene and gay, cannot call himself happy ; he is at most *diverted*. This word is the true name for this world's happiness. A poet has described happiness as only an unhappiness more or less con-

soled. "The world," said Madame de Lambert, "is full of fugitives from themselves." Pascal had said this before, and he had told why.

Do not let us forget it : he that is contented is for that very reason happy ; this is why the art of rendering men contented deserves attention. The most happy or least unhappy eras, to take these words in their ordinary sense, are not the most contented ; and we may remark in general, that the more discontented a people is, the less reason it has to be so. Its complaint is then more defined, and it better knows what it lacks. Let us look on contentment as an element of the happiness of man ; let us acknowledge therein a part not only of that happiness, but of the moral disposition that becomes a society.

Is not love the only food that suits the happy soul ?

An ungrateful happiness is so poor a one, that we must needs be grateful, were it only out of interested motives, and in order to know that we have been happy ; for can we be truly happy when we do not believe ourselves to be so ?

It is a thing invariable and acknowledged, whether you take men of the world or pious people, that more accents of love rise from the mouth of the sorrowing than the happy, and that misfortune is in general more grateful than prosperity.

There is something alarming in too prolonged a happiness, unless that happiness be humble, earnest, and grateful.

Which of us has not despised, or does not despise happiness? We despise it, at all events, in this sense, that we are not conscious of it, and this because we fail to reflect that happiness is not due to us, that it is a simple gift, and the effect of pure grace; that he who gives it might have withheld; that we only continue to enjoy it because his goodness daily spares it to us, and that very far from our happiness alone being in the order of things, being our natural condition, it would be quite as conformable to that order, and quite as natural, that we should be unhappy; that, upon the whole, our unhappiness would be easier to comprehend than our happiness; and that the latter is only in the order of events, in so far as it is the will of God to give it or preserve it to us. We ought only to look upon it as a *reprieve*, as a merciful delay, as an effect of divine patience, only to receive it day by day as an unexpected favour, and in the same manner as the guilty man receives a pardon, which he had no right to look for. But how far are we from this!

Alas! all happiness is insolent, were it the most obscure and most vulgar. Yes, the habit of finding for so many years a roof to cover our head, a bed whereon to stretch our weary frame, regular food when we are hungry,—this mere habit has the same effect that conquests may exercise upon a great captain, and fortunate speculations upon a judicious merchant. Every happiness which does not render grateful renders insolent.

In general, happiness, in the worldly sense, consists in dreaming, and ceases with sleep. To see things as they are, without knowing God as he is, is certainly not an element of human felicity.

All happiness is destined to become a grace, as each grace in its turn ought to become a happiness.

There is no medium ; if happiness does no good to our soul, it does it harm ; if it does not sanctify, it corrupts us. The happier we are, the more we must tremble and the more we must pray.

I am as much bent upon disavowing utilitarian Christianity as on defending Christian utilitarianism.

The glory and happiness of heaven will consist in seeing.

There has gradually risen up under the very shadow of the vital doctrines of the gospel, and under the form of a severe and vigilant orthodoxy, a Christianity which is nothing but a theory of happiness, and a system of personal security. There are Christians who in Christianity have mistaken the starting-point for the goal, and the means for the end, and who, instead of proceeding from happiness to love, stop short at happiness,—interpreting to the dishonour of Christianity, and their own shame, that declaration of Christ, that “ the work of God ” (or the work according to God), “ is to believe in him whom he has sent.”

Each of us having been able dimly to apprehend, in certain moments of his life, that a lively sentiment of happiness may co-exist with bodily pains or bitter sorrows ; and that a keen feeling of misery may pre-

vail over elements of the most entire prosperity ; each in those moments has had the presentiment or the vision of a moral happiness which must be that of heaven, and of a moral misery which must be that of hell, or rather of a happiness which must be heaven, and a wretchedness which must be hell.

The most fortunate of mortals, he who by an unheard-of privilege, should only at the end of his career have recollections of prosperity only (I do not say happiness), would be a man who had never loved. If he had loved, he would have suffered ; he must needs have suffered in others ; and the general aspect of human life would necessarily have led him to the most painful reflections. But in all cases he would have to die, to leave this delightful sojourn, to tread the path of death into a gloomy future ; and in the prevision of this inevitable end, it would not be once, but daily, that he would die, yes, daily die to joy ; and the keenest movements of gladness which might thrill his heart, would be but the rousing up of that eternal sadness, which in the human breast may sleep, indeed, but never die.

The light of life is not happiness, but consolation ; it is not what we see, but what we do not see ; and to say the whole truth, it is not what we receive but what we give, according to the spirit of these words of our Lord, " It is more blessed to give than to receive " (Acts xx. 35). The brightness of our life consists in believing, in hoping, in loving.

Vulgar happiness consists in receiving, and can

never receive enough ; love needs to give, and has never given enough ; sacrifices exhaust the one, sacrifices sustain the other ; and while the first would gain nothing in gaining the whole world, the latter enriches itself by its very losses.

The happiness even of being loved would be incomplete without that of loving ; and if the charity of God be infinitely precious to man, it is so, be sure, as giving him scope, and as it were constraining him to return love for love. The climax of God's grace, the last word of his love, the summary of the gospel, ---the end for us of the work of redemption, is not to be loved, it is to love.

One may be kind-hearted, and yet not spread one's happiness far and wide ; happiness loves the shade ; there it recollects itself and becomes more sure of itself ; and to know how to temper its brilliance is sometimes one of the prudent proceedings of charity. But it cannot be so with gratitude. It is essential to gratitude to manifest itself ; no one will ever believe in it if it keep silent ; gratitude gives a voice to all that is within us, and happiness itself only finds one in the interests of gratitude. It is in this sense that it becomes it to shed its rays abroad. What do I say ? In a spiritual religion gratitude is the principal element of happiness, its truest and its most beautiful name. In the point of view of such a religion, he who is not grateful has no cause for gratitude, for he has received nothing but the shadow and phantom of happiness.

We must not disguise it from ourselves ; happiness, even when sanctified, is but *one* of the points of view from which we may contemplate human life ; happiness does not indeed distort our sight, but it may limit it ; and those in whom it is intensified by that other natural and elementary happiness which we each enjoy in turn, and which is called *youth*, are liable, even with the best-tempered mind, to become a little exclusive, a little absolute.

In appreciating the acts of a government, a people, or an individual, we rarely go back far enough ; blame stops midway, and attaches itself to a part,—reprehensible, no doubt, but which is only the corollary, morally or politically inevitable, of some more general and remote action.

Something, too, of the same kind, may be said of the successive embarrassments and reverses that overtake ourselves ; not one of them in particular, perhaps, is our own doing, but yet all are so, inasmuch as they were contained in germ in some first false step that we might have avoided.

A thorough knowledge of the truth would lay to the charge of each one of us, almost all the evils that we attribute to a foreign influence. Such thorough knowledge would set nature and other men free from almost all the reproaches with which our grief loads them.

If all suffering does not spring from disorder, all disorder infallibly engenders suffering.

We murmur whenever, instead of receiving trials with reverence, resignation, and confidence, we com-

plain of them as of things that should not have happened. We murmur whenever the tears allowed to the sensibility of nature, turn into impatience and fretfulness. We murmur when in any affliction whatsoever we refuse to be comforted ; we murmur when in any misfortune that springs from the nature of men we only fix our eyes on those men, and not on the fatherly purposes of God, of which they have unwittingly been the instruments. We murmur when we do not know how to bear the faults of those who surround us, and each movement of anger against them is a murmur against God. We murmur, in a word, and our whole life is a murmur, when we do not submit, in heart as well as words, to all dispensations from above ; and however we may express ourselves, whatever respect we may evince for the will of God, however careful we may be to refer ourselves by way of compliment to God's care and help, still we are secretly in revolt against him so long as we carry on a quarrel with his providence. Judge, then, how many murmurers there are amongst us.

Unless you suppose that there is no other God than chance, you will have to admit that chastisements are a principal means of education to man, and that the blessings which God pours forth so liberally, suffice to the conversion of but a very few, and to the sanctification of none.

Christ is not come to deliver us from suffering and from death, but to teach us how to suffer and to die.

He did more than suppress death and pain : he rendered them useful instead of useless. Useful ! How weak a word ! He rendered them so precious, that their existence is to the believer one of the benefits and mercies of God.

If every Christian regard as the subject of a perfect joy the different trials to which he is exposed, the grace of God may raise him higher, and enable him actually to feel that joy.

Suffering is necessary in order that Jesus Christ should profit us, just as Jesus Christ is necessary in order that suffering should do so.

How difficult under its apparent smoothness ; how formidable in its amenity is the life of the Christian whom calamity does not admonish ! The effect of temporal prosperity is to blind and to set asleep. What an effort is required to keep awake in the midst of external peace ! What an impetus to advance on a sea whose waters are rendered heavy as lead by a dangerous calm ! Misfortune, at least for a season, restores everything to its place ; makes in some sort visible what was invisible, and invisible what was visible before.

Woe to him who should be without affliction here below—whom the divine educator should have excluded from his mysterious school ! We might well ask ourselves, at sight of so alarming a felicity, what then has he done to be thus overlooked ? Is he too pure to be passed through the crucible, or too bad, too desperate to be worth trying there ?

No doubt, education by sorrow would be useless if the question were merely of perfecting us ; the angels have to be perfected, and God does not chasten them ; but it is indispensable to beings who have to be *re-generated*.

Perhaps to suffer is nothing else than to live more deeply. Love and sorrow are the two conditions of a profound life.

Would all the dignity of our nature be revealed were it not for sorrow ? Joy itself is but a superficial and vulgar life, unless it has been preceded by a holy grief.

Sadness is the lot of deep souls and strong intellects. To suffer most is the privilege of whosoever feels most, and the furrows traced by powerful thought deepen into abysses beneath its pressure.

He who has embraced Jesus Christ by faith, he who in the desert skies has at length found a father,—will be both meek and strong in sorrow ; for what is there at once stronger and gentler than faith, hope, and love ? Do not expect from such an one in the hour of trial either a submission without energy, or a proud inflexibility. He is what man ought to be, armed with courage and adorned with humility, upright before fortune, on his knees before God.

We never take patience under an affliction except by the consideration of some good ; it is this good alone which makes the affliction endured, or, what is better, accepted. We are patient because we are beforehand consoled, so that to say to any one, ‘ Act,

so that when affliction comes it may find you patient,' is to say in other words, 'Lay up a share of consolation, furnish yourself with joy, have happiness to oppose to unhappiness.'

Nothing teaches more things to the soul than grief.

If grief often lull to sleep, it sometimes intoxicates ; it gives a secret sentiment of importance ; it occupies us with self ; absorbs us in the contemplation of self, and frees us, at least, from humiliating joys.

If a pious grief shares with joy the privilege of shortening time, if the days pass swiftly to the broken heart that weeps ; it is far otherwise with an affliction which is rather that of the body than the soul ; it has all the character and all the effects of *ennui*, for it is at bottom only *ennui*.

The griefs of charity are a thousand times better than the joys of selfishness ; to love is its own reward, its own consolation ; always to suffer, yet always to love, would be paradise in comparison with always prospering and always hating.

In theory, there are few who do not despise life ; for it does not answer exactly to the ideal of any. Man has within him the feeling that he is made for perfection and happiness. From this point of view we can understand the assertion that melancholy is the characteristic of all profound natures.

Under one aspect melancholy is Christian. When the Christian compares with that new earth *where dwelleth righteousness*—righteousness, the most im-

perious want of our souls, that which attracts us to the luminous and serene heights of eternity—compares, I say, with it this earth steeped in our tears and soiled by our sins, he may well feel sadness.

We must always give to the mourning soul a reason for rejoicing ; all other consolation is empty as nothingness.

Sadness is the death of the soul ; joy is its life. Sadness crushes us back and imprisons us in self ; joy expands, dilates, and diffuses us : it is to the soul what a gentle warmth is to the body.

Every soul carries within it unawares a treasure of sadness. Nay, it is even a condition of our nature that some touch of sadness should ever mingle with our keenest joys ; like a distant murmur, a half-stifled moan in a song of gladness. One might say that the very note of joy roused in the depths of the soul a grief that was slumbering there ; that the lurking consciousness of our misery waited that precise moment to seize upon us, and that the fires lit up in our night served as signals to the phantom. . . . The purest joy, the deepest, the most holy, is never, so long as the world and the flesh retain us in their bonds, exempt from some melancholy reactions. Such reactions, it is true, are far from troubling and impoverishing it ; they, on the contrary, nourish it, give it room to break forth, put new songs into its mouth. Nevertheless this joy is like Samson's honey : it has been found in the mouth of the lion ; this sweet has sprung from the *bitter*, and if we no longer

taste that bitter, it takes care to recall itself to memory.

Nothing is more according to God than the sadness of a Christian after he has sinned. We may even say, in one sense, that it can never be excessive. Sin which has necessitated on the part of God an excess of mercy, may well merit on man's part an excess of sorrow ; and just as the first of these excesses has produced no disorder in God, so the second gives room to no disorder in man.

Every sorrow that does not lead to joy is disorder in the eyes of God.

The greatest compensation that our sorrows know is to be understood.

A faith without joy is an altar without incense. Joy is the sign and the ornament of gratitude. Joy ought to crown all our feelings towards God, and all our religious actions ; we must anoint our head and wash our face even when we fast.

True joy is *humble* ; it does not excite the turbulence of vanity, does not make the heart overflow like an over-filled vessel ; it replaces, retains man in his proper position ; it does not make him God in place of God. By constantly leading him back to the source of his happiness, it gives him to feel and taste his dependence ; he only rejoices in trembling, knowing well that his felicity is not his own, that it might very well have never been his, and that humility and gratitude give to joy its true sweetness, and all its purity.

It is our joy and not our sadness that honours God.

Christian joy does not indeed fly from intercourse with men, but it is still less afraid of solitude ; on the contrary, it strengthens itself thereby, for it finds there, more than anywhere else, its ever-flowing fountains, prayer and contemplation ; it flourishes where other joys wither ; it redoubles where they expire.

There is only one grief that must interrupt joy, and in which for a longer or shorter time it is engulfed and absorbed : I mean the grief of sin.

Christianity grants moments to sadness, but it dedicates our whole life to joy.

God forbid that by confounding a gospel grace with a result of temperament I should impose on Christian joy a certain physiognomy and certain expression, and insist upon its shedding its beams abroad like a sun ! Let us admit that natural disposition and circumstances alike may temper the brilliancy of this joy, but never let us allow that they can extinguish it outright ; faith may indeed be without gladness and transport, but faith without joy is faith no longer.

Joy is not only the privilege of the Christian, but his strength as well.

It has been so ordered that the dispensation which carried joy into man's heart, should by the same stroke carry love with it. A divine violence has been done to that heart which could only be gained by violence. Man had inverted all his relations with God ; God in his turn inverted all his relations with

man. Man had made himself God ; God made himself man. Man had refused everything to God ; God gave himself to man in the person of Jesus Christ. The cross raised on Golgotha has shown to humanity a prodigy of love in an earnest of reconciliation.

A Christian, and sad ; worldly, and joyous : are these synonymous ? As for me, I declare that ever since I have been in a condition to observe, nothing has struck me so much in society as the way in which cheerfulness and sadness are distributed. I have generally found depression, dark views, morose tempers, and misanthropy on the side where the gospel has no place ; it is within the sphere of its influence that I have met serenity, contentment, and peace.¹ But where, it may be asked, do people amuse themselves most ? Ah ! let us state the question fairly : where is it that most efforts are made to exorcise *ennui*, to stun pain, to take the soul out of itself ? I allow, indeed, that this is in the world. But if there were a world where this was not needed, a world in which happiness was so indigenous, so native, that all that is elsewhere invented to evoke it was there only adapted to banish and destroy it,—a world where the effect of these amusements would be to distract the soul, not from its grief, but its happiness : in which of the two worlds, I pray you,

¹ This of course applies to heart Christians renewed in love. The Christianity of speculation, which has not become a life of the soul, the Christianity of sect and party, in a word, the phantom of Christianity, does not indeed cheer, it rather saddens. In the divine system of the gospel, love is born of joy, and brings forth joy. There is happiness only in a loving heart.

would joy be really found? The world in which there is most *amusement* is necessarily the saddest; and since literature is only the world written, Christian literature must be less sad than any other.

Trembling—that is to say, a deep reverence, a sentiment and an avowal of dependence, a humiliation so much the more profound that the joy is more keen—this should not diminish, but sanctify joy in the heart of every one who believes in God, and who knows that he himself can do nothing, and possesses nothing on any other title than that of a temporary and ever revocable concession, and that there is no strength, wisdom, or prudence that can resist the Lord.

There is a spiritual and supernatural joy which reposes in the depths of the Christian soul in quiet days, but which affliction causes to bubble up and overflow, and which reserves all that it has of most touching and tender for those very moments when all joy seems impossible. This joy of the spirit does not do away, indeed, with the sadness of nature; but, on the other hand, it is not extinguished thereby, the two co-exist side by side,—the sadness serving as occasion and aliment to the joy, the joy preventing the excess of the sadness.

2. *Love of Glory; Habits; Solitude; Extraordinary Virtues; Fasting; Anger; Prayer.*

Rich or poor, great or small, we all love glory. This craving for the esteem of others follows us like our shadow.

This is what is to be condemned : the praises of men made the motive of our actions, their approbation preferred to that of God ; the glory that comes from men aspired to, that which is of God neglected.

There is no ambition, however beautiful the name it wear, that the gospel does not tread under foot.

Without counting all the illusions of hope, is not this premature perspective of glory an *unfortunate* thing in a moral sense ? Does it not distort the quite moral, quite loving point of view to which childhood should be carefully kept ? And amongst celebrated men, have not the greatest grown up in the shade, less occupied with their future renown than with the noble attractions of science, art, or virtue ?

There is danger attached to all elevation : we must not except even spiritual elevation.

There is but one approbation that may be sought without peril,—in heaven, God's ; on earth, that of his saints. And even this last must be sought only as a manifestation of the former. Generally speaking, the rebukes of the just are of more value than their praise.

The triumphs of self-love are sad and vain ; they do not fill the heart, they only deepen more and more its immense and devouring void ; the first effect of one triumph is to make us desirous of another ; the reactions of opinion are excessive and

cruel ; it is folly to put our happiness in the power of so inconsistent and changeful a thing. When once this desire for esteem and applause has taken possession of the soul, it lets nothing exist by the side of it.

There is no room for love in a soul filled with the thirst for praise ; nothing withers up the heart more than this fatal passion ; it robs us of the most pure enjoyments and most modest emotions of which our soul is susceptible.

Ah ! how much easier it is to the poor man to eat his food without salt, than to our poor nature to content itself with the testimony of conscience uncombined with one single grain of that salt with which human approbation seasons our sacrifices.

We more readily and sooner overcome all other obstacles than that which results from the love of the praise of men.

To make sure of human praise we must accommodate ourselves to men's maxims, proportion ourselves to their stature ; it is not permitted to surpass, that is to say, to humble those from whom we expect applause ; and, on the other hand, in order to be ourselves perfect, we must above all woo the gaze, and aspire to the ambition of a perfect being.

Habits are ties, chains. We contract them imperceptibly, and often without finding any pleasure in them, but we cannot break them without pain. It is a hard thing to be no longer what we have always

been, to do no more what we have always done. Life itself in its least attractive form, the life least worthy of the name, is endeared to us by the mere habit of living, and we may be seen suspending very carefully to the walls of our dwelling frames that enclose nothing. The most intimate attachments, to say nothing of the most incontestable duties, have often had to give way before the power of habit. To have our loins girt, then, implies not only that we be on our guard against our attachments, but that we prevent our habits from striking root too deeply within us. Look upon nothing that is habitual as small, as indifferent. The most invisible bonds are not the weakest, and in all cases it is their number that makes them indestructible; a cable, we must remember, is only composed of threads. It is impossible to dispense with habits; a life without them is a life without a rule. But with regard to them, as to everything else, we must say with the apostle, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. vi. 12).

Without having recourse to any malignant or degrading explanation, it is certain that we very often act because we have acted; we continue because we have begun; we attach ourselves to our work because it is our own, because it is work. It is only looking to Christ that can give to action, not that feverish vivacity which it will always amply obtain from our passions, but that calm force, that

moderation, that delicate exactness, that beauty that our passions will never confer upon it.¹

The reform of habits is nothing without the reform of the heart. Many Christians, after having outwardly enrolled themselves in the service of Jesus Christ, after having apparently ruled their life according to his example and commandment, persist in some habit or tendency contrary to the gospel, or else,—which at bottom amounts to the same,—attach themselves so much to things intrinsically innocent and lawful, that when a moment comes in which the Lord's service would require the sacrifice of these, they find themselves incapable of it, and contradict all their former concessions by a disgraceful refusal.

Solitude, when too profound and prolonged, has other, but not fewer dangers than the world; it is a habit contrary to the will of the Creator, who has declared it not good for man to be alone; it is contrary to the mind of Christ, who prayed his Father not to take us out of the world, but to preserve us from evil: it is therefore advisable only as an exception, not a rule; but as an exception or a remedy (a remedy is not food) it is very advisable.

True solitude is in the heart; and he who cannot find it there would not find it elsewhere; we generally meet the world in our closets when we carry it with us there.

¹ See, on Habit in general, *Psychology*, vol. ii.

Many a hermit lives in the world ; many a man of the world lives in solitude.

We do not think ourselves guilty of exaggeration in affirming that those who dislike solitude dislike truth. At all events, it is certain that such as love not truth love not solitude either.

Solitude, if prolonged, would be as injurious to our religion as too constant intercourse with the external world.

“It is not good,” even under a religious point of view, “that man should be alone” (Gen. ii. 18) ; but it would be still less good that he never should be so. By dint of mingling with men we lose our individual impress ; we exchange our peculiar character for the general character ; we think with the mind of others, we cease to be ourselves. Now, to become a Christian, it is essential, first of all, to be ourselves ; we must be our own before we can give ourselves to God. If, in mixing with the world, we were to lose that native form of our being which constitutes our personality, truth in addressing us would seek to get a hold of us in vain ; and we, who should have gradually allowed the soul of everybody else to substitute itself for ours, should no longer have wherewithal to feel, to recognise, and to appropriate the truth.

We must not consider solitude as a state, but as an action, an exercise ; in order to continue in retreat, it must have already begun in the heart ; nay, it must even be able to consummate itself

there. It must be more or less independent of external circumstance, so that even in the agitation of action and the noise of the world we may be able to enjoy its benefits.

A truly solitary heart is that in which God is present ; the presence of God, which is the end of solitude, is also its means.

Oh, my dear brothers, never to the last moment consent to the isolation to which you are condemned ; let it never be your own doing ; be exiled, but do not exile yourselves ; do not shut yourselves up in a selfish peace ; descend from your glory without disavowing or renouncing it ; sinners, mix with sinners without partaking in sin ; never let your own security render you hard, or Christianity remove you out of the pale of humanity ; be, on the contrary, so much the more human that you are more Christian.

Beware lest, isolated by your own faith on the summit of your new dignity, pride find you out in your solitude, and cast you down from those heights, not into the ranks of that multitude that you have too much ignored, but far below them.

Do not require brilliant things only from Christian faith ; for its distinguishing peculiarity is to keep all the strings of our souls stretched at once, and to spread its influence over every point of our life.

The superfluous is the necessary of the Christian : the extraordinary his ordinary ; the goal for some is

the starting-point for others ; and as the men of the world only call natural that which is ordinary, the true Christian ought to be in their eyes a supernatural being or a chimera.

The extraordinary is the law of the moral world, and consequently the character of Christian life, which is the true moral life.

It is as a whole that the gospel is extraordinary. It is not armed here and there, but at all points. This religion is all terror as it is all love. It is all terror for whomsoever it is not all love. The spirit with which the gospel is full is a new spirit. As it creates a new man, so it creates a new society.

He who should deduce from the precepts of Jesus Christ that he was to do extraordinary things, that he had the right or the obligation to startle and shock his fellow-creatures for no adequate reason, to be, in fact, gratuitously unintelligible, would indeed have wholly misinterpreted the gospel ; but he who should make it a law to be always understood and never to surprise, would show an equally incorrect appreciation. We may not be Christians on these terms ; nay, we can only be so on the condition of willingly consenting, whenever the glory of God and the welfare of our brethren shall require it, to scandalize worldly wisdom.

What noise is made by the life of the Christian ? The least possible. It sounds like the bell in our steeples when it is struck ; but of itself it is

silent. True, its being struck or not does not depend upon itself; nor is it optional to it—true and rare diamond as it is—to shoot out rays or not when it meets those of the sun. Let it do what it may; it must burst forth openly some day or other. It is not extraordinary for nothing.

Fasting, too much neglected and decried among us, is a good and beautiful institution. It gives a more tangible form to ideas that should habitually dominate us,—those of our unworthiness and our dependence. It restores to mind what it takes away from matter, and by relieving, in a manner, the soul that is generally oppressed with the burden of the flesh, it facilitates its soaring up towards the objects of the invisible world. Finally, by the voluntary privations it imposes, it increases our compassion for the involuntary privations of so many of our brethren, whose life, alas! is one perpetual fast.

But, after all, the nature of fasting entirely depends upon the dispositions by which it is accompanied.

Anger, from the point of view of Christianity, is not only unlawful, but irrational.

The anger of man is always unjust. What is just and becoming on his part, is to have pity on others as the Lord has had pity on him. Let him defend instead of accusing.

Prayer resembles the atmosphere of certain islands of the ocean, which is so pure that no venomous creature can live in it. We ought to surround our-

selves with this atmosphere, as the diver with his bell before he descends into the sea.

Prayer is represented in the gospel as a holy and solemn act, which we cannot surround with too many precautions, lest anything worldly or profane should disturb the reverential intimacy of this communion of the creature with his Creator. If prayer is oftenest presented to us by the sacred writers as the means of Christian life, one might sometimes think, to hear them, that prayer is its end, and that we must, alternately, pray in order to be able to live Christianly, and live Christianly in order to be able to pray. Prayer prepares for acts of self-abnegation, courage, and charity; and in their turn, acts of charity, courage, and abnegation prepare for prayer.

To make prayer an end, and to regulate our life with reference to this solemn moment, supposes an advance in the way of holiness, and a delicacy of Christian sentiment, to which we attain only by degrees.

Prayer, which has a right over our whole life, nevertheless claims from it a place apart and consecrated hours. This act of prayer, unless an effort be made to concentrate it, will turn into a superficial emotion and a vague reverie; thought and reflection, without which no serious act gets accomplished, will cease to form part of it; and prayer, which ought to be an exercise, a labour of the soul, will only be (God forgive it us) a sort of amusement to it. There is almost always dangerous presumption in the

neglect of ordinary means ; as in the faithful use of them there is a salutary exercise of submission and humility. The neglect of means of grace comes nearer than may be supposed to the contempt of them. This disdain of the external form may gradually go so far that the very object to which the form belongs will melt and vanish away ; and it is much to be feared that he who disdains to enter into his closet to pray, will end sooner than he imagines by praying nowhere. . . . Means are despised ; but prayer is also a means ; and if it be thought unworthy of one's-self to reserve for it certain stated hours, one will probably end in considering it unworthy of one's-self to pray at all.

In all times the Church has sufficed to the Church, truth to truth. Eloquence and enthusiasm have done less for this sacred cause than the modest virtues, the uniform activity, and patient prayers of millions of the faithful, whose names are utterly unknown.

We do not pray with the understanding, but with the heart.

Prayer is the only regular and complete form of religious thought.

The child of God has great privileges, but the greatest of all is to know how to supplicate.

He that prays is nearer to Jesus Christ than the apostles were.

Isolated and guided entirely by his individual opinion, it is probable that man would only offer a

very simple worship to the object of his adoration. But his relations with his fellow-creatures soon tend to complicate forms. He thinks more forms needed to act upon his family, than to act upon himself.

Religious services are of such importance for keeping up religion amongst the masses, that they alone often do, in that respect, what truth would not so certainly do.

It is important to embody the sentiments and fundamental ideas of religion. Life can no more dispense with symbols than language with metaphors : a ritual is an acted metaphor.

Adoration is a state of soul that can only be expressed by song.

3. Biographies (Study of Self; Narrative of Experience); Death; Miscellaneous Thoughts.

In order that biographies should offer a really religious interest, they must, above all, be true ; that is to say, they must be complete. What is wanted here, is not precept, but example ; it is not a theory, or even a symbol, of Christian life ; it is a Christian life itself.

The true, the best monument of a beautiful life, is the detailed account of it ; it is a monument which not only commemorates, but informs and instructs.

A long narrative may be made of an empty life, in which there have been many vicissitudes ;

while a very full life has sometimes been written in few pages, nay, in only one. But it is with a full life as with a solid body : it may be of any dimensions. To follow the line to the end is not enough for the biographer ; if he does not penetrate into the interior, if he does not dig far below the surface, he has told us nothing, and the man does not get known.

It is not very certain that the mutual recital of our intimate experiences, even from one man to another, be unattended with disadvantages. How then should such confidence, to the first comer or the public, be free from danger ? We believe to have ascertained that a truly earnest faith, a faith realized in life, produces two counterbalancing effects ; the first to arm us with frankness, the second to inspire us with reserve.

It has been said that the soul has its modest shrinking from exposure as well as the body, and that religious sentiment, or rather a living faith, renders this feeling far more delicate and timid. At a lower degree of religious life, we are at once less frank and more indiscreet ; in proportion as the inner life develops and strengthens, both candour and discretion increase.

The advice to keep a daily and detailed journal has sometimes been too unqualifiedly given. We must not speak overmuch of self, even to blame it ; but it is useful to take note of the most important facts of our life.

There is a principle of death, partial death, in the

habit of insisting on, of realizing our own sin and poverty, instead of dwelling with delight on the goodness of God. We do not fall so far as despair, I know; because, arrived at its brink, we are held back by the remembrance of Jesus Christ as by a chain which makes itself felt at the very moment that it is strained to the utmost, so that we can no longer take an onward step towards the abyss, unless, indeed, it were to break; we do not, then, arrive at despair, but at a deep depression. The soul, in spite of the rays which from time to time shine on it from the side of the cross, is habitually sad, and feeble in proportion. It had thought it enough to look at Jesus once for all; but the fact is, we must be constantly looking to him or else at sin. The eye, unless it be blind, has no other alternative; and if it be certain that we shall not lose sight of our own sinfulness by looking at Christ crucified,—that sinfulness being as it were engraved upon his cross,—it is also certain, that in contemplating our own misery, we may lose sight of Jesus Christ, because the cross is not naturally engraved in the image of that misery. . . . It is not in our own wounds, but in those of Jesus, that we must put our hands.

The idea of death, steadfastly contemplated, contains or recalls all infinite ideas.

Death is the tie that binds all morality.

We must have already tasted the heavenly life, to prefer it, without hesitation and without reserve, to

a life of intellectual and religious activity, full of good works, high thoughts, and sweet affections. At all events, we love all these things pertaining to human life; and when we have only valued and enjoyed it under these conditions, it is pardonable to regret what it was lawful to love. In like manner, the exile, when he has formed friendships in the land of his banishment, weeps in bidding them farewell, although on the point of returning to the country for which he has so long yearned, and which he would never have consented to renounce. And will his country view as any wrong to her the parting sigh given to the sweeteners of his exile?

It is the triumph of faith to detach from life a soul that lives, if one may so say, with a very full, very strong, very complex life; for perhaps it is not universally known how the abundance of thoughts makes us live more intensely, and consequently renders death more difficult and strange.

How difficult feeble health makes some of our duties, perhaps the most essential! Illness must inevitably make worse those whom it does not make better.

I can conceive the almost superhuman energy of an eminent Christian shaking off, in his last moments, the weight of an invincible sleep, in order to die conscious, like that emperor who would die standing. I can conceive the solemn discourses, the transports, the hymns; the whole glory, if one may so say, of a Christian death,—final conflict, final

victory, final work of a holy life ! But I confess that death without pomp touches me most deeply ; and a humble peace seems the most magnificent ornament of that solemn moment.

There are many degrees and shades in that desire to depart that Christians experience. Acquiescence in death may leave room for many regrets, many bitternesses. It is possible that there may be, even in a truly Christian soul, a physical apprehension of death ; there may be failure of assurance in presence of the great enemy, and even a remnant of the anguish of the trembling sinner before God. All this may be found at a Christian's deathbed ; I say so from experience. A drop of gall may lie hidden at the bottom of the cup of blessings. After all, on the face of death, be it ever so benign, there has remained, as it were, the brand of the anger of the Most High. Every death that is pious is beautiful enough ; and for my part, I almost prefer a humble confidence to striking transports. It is given to some Christians to die like new-born babes, according to an expression of Chateaubriand. A poet has gone further, and has attributed poetic inspiration to the dying Christian ; but there is in this something profane. I prefer what is simple and natural ; I prefer the last words of the Princess Palatine : " I am going to see how God will deal with me, but I hope in his mercy." Deaths apparently troubled may be Christian at bottom. The promises of God do not fail us at our last hour, only he fulfils them

in various ways. But what of that, so he does fulfil them?

It is those who forget death who forget to live well.

Is any one in doubt as to the lawfulness of his efforts, the employment of his life? Let him place himself in the presence of death!

We, who do not endure, accomplish works that do. Let us throw our whole faculties into whatever task lies before us; let us make the best use we can of the leisure, the resources, the life that God gives us; do not let us lead a half-life, a wasted life; but at the same time, let us continually remind ourselves of the conditions of our existence; while abiding, let us be ready to depart; departing ever in spirit; having our loins girded.

In order to be able to separate from self, we must have separated beforehand. We must have anticipated events; the signal for departure must find us already on the way.

We must practise ourselves in dying. Now this is no trifling science; on the contrary, it is the greatest of all, and I cannot comprehend how he who has not, by slow degrees and leisurely, learned how to die, should learn it suddenly and at once at the moment when decidedly it has to be known.

If there be in society or in the Church a man who is useful and seems necessary, one might say that our esteem and gratitude mark him out for, recommend him to, the stroke of death. Through a crowd

of insignificant beings, that, as it seems, death spares because it despises ; it walks straight up to that man and lays him in the dust.

Life is a journey from the south to the north, from summer to winter ; and the declining years find us settled on a bare and ingrate soil, which hardly affords our own hearts enough to live on, and whose only ornament is the sad and tender recollection of a happier dwelling-place.

In the bosom of Christianity, to live ill is to die.

Death is a necessary part of the great system ; the death of individuals constitutes the life of the whole, and to suppress death would be to suppress the world. Do not say that here divine wisdom has slept, and that death has only glided into the world under cover of that sleep. It is sin that has introduced death into the world, but it has entered it with a lofty bearing, with the permission, or rather the express order, of him who is called the Lord of life and death.

Death is prone to take the moment of our joy, and the hour of our triumphs, to warn us of his presence. Domestic affliction, coming then, seems sent to concentrate the soul that the agitations of a too public life dissipates, and tends, so to speak, to dissolve into space.

The Christian paradise is the end of sin and peril ; the hour of deliverance and consummation ; the victory of life over death ; the positive triumph of unity in man ; the tuning of all parts of creation, like the

numberless chords of an immense lyre, into perfect harmony; the lifting of every veil; the ways of God at length justified; the solution of innumerable enigmas proclaimed; the long sigh of creation dying away into ecstasy: in short, it is for each faith changed into sight, and man no longer conscious of his personality, save as the seal of his resemblance to God.

The Christian neither suffers nor dies in spite of himself; he wills beforehand whatever his Master wills; and for him necessity is changed into liberty. He knows he is to be stripped of everything; well then, he can be glad that God helps him to become so; he knows that he must die, therefore he anticipates death by dying daily, and separating himself daily more and more from self.

If the general life of those who bear the name of Christians calumniates the divine origin of their religion, the exceptional life of a certain number has in all times revealed the supernatural virtue that dwelt in them.

If there are inconsistent Christians, it is that they are not yet Christian enough.

If the true life does not begin here below, it never will begin; and to refuse a heaven on earth is equally to refuse one in heaven.

Vessels of an invisible sanctuary, we are consecrated for the exclusive purposes of worship; and true worship in spirit and in truth is to reproduce faithfully in ourselves the image of him who has loved us. It is not enough merely to abstain from what offends

him, but we must, by a principle of love, and according to the strength given us, do whatever is pleasing in his sight, whatever makes us like unto him.

Weak and miserable by nature, man feels himself stronger when he appears before the Supreme Being, in company with other beings afflicted by the same weakness.

The sacred writers only speak to us in general terms of the happiness of the elect; they do not detail its circumstances, and by this they invite us to bridle a frivolous and dangerous curiosity. It matters little to us to know if the state of the blessed will have its periods and gradations; what does matter is that we should love God, and know that if we abide in his love we shall lack nothing, whatever may be the dispensation of his eternal wisdom with regard to the course of our future existence.

Having of late reflected a good deal upon the religious works of Fénélon, I think that their perusal may be put off without loss, nay, even with advantage.

In the unfortunate condition of our nature, we should not go far on a road that continued too long, dark, and gloomy; the pursuit of an immaterial and unseen good wearies sooner than any other, and stands more than any other in need of encouragement. On such a road, each step we take must be paid in ready money; at all events, it is only for the strong, for grown men, that refusals or rather delays are reserved by a wisdom always merciful, a goodness always prudent.

Neighbours, friends, are the wealth of the heart;

a wealth in poverty for which the most indigent may well be envied by the richest, to whom these possessions are so often refused, or from whom they are taken away.

If we groan over the fate of a being snatched from happiness and hope in the morning of his days, we nevertheless devote still more regret to the aged man who consecrated all the moments of his long life to the practice of virtue.

Precipitation is more injurious than is supposed to our religious studies ; we read too much ; we read carelessly, consequently we do not digest well, and are little nourished. It is our own hearts above all that we must learn to read ; and some of us by reading too little of the Divine Word, and others by reading the writings of men too much or too hastily, rob themselves of the power, or refuse themselves the time, to read the inner volume.

We must make allowance for certain natures as well as for certain moments in every life. All the faculties that God has given us must needs be satisfied. It would be as unjust to interdict enthusiasm, as foolish to prescribe it. We cannot reduce the pious soul to one single method of honouring what it loves. Nay, there is even at the bottom of every soul a need not only of controlling itself but of shedding itself abroad,—a need which in certain moments takes us as it were out of ourselves, and strives to unite us to the object of our worship more immediately and sensibly than by simple obedience.

We have the right, after Jesus Christ, to recommend to you contemplation. The joy of salvation is necessary, I own, to set at liberty within our hearts the love fettered there; but when once its chain is broken, what have we to do but to let it take wing, and go and quench its thirst and animate its energies without ceasing, in the contemplation of the most perfect of all loves?

Every Christian is above all a witness; every witness is beforehand a martyr.

"*Impossible* is not a French word," said a warrior of that brave and enterprising nation. With how much more reason may we not say: "*Impossible* is not a Christian word!"

Under the soft radiance of prosperity religion looks beautiful; we are happy beside it; it is easy to believe ourselves happy through it. We fancy that we owe to it all the agreeable impressions that we have only associated with its idea. And as it is natural that its idea should beautify whatever it accompanies, and that prosperity should receive a reflected lustre from the serene perfections of faith, some measure of truth blends with our error and renders it more inevitable. Thus we can only be sure of the principle and nature of our joy, when the elements of worldly enjoyment vanish, and leave us face to face with that religion which we have up to that time considered the true cause of our contentment.

It is difficult, I allow, to venture to stand alone in one's opinion and conduct; but I hold it for cer-

tain that he is no Christian who is not called upon at one time or another to do so. All at least may be so called upon ; this is the condition, the glory, and the peril of the Christian.

Nothing more universal nor more natural than the regret not to have seen Christ, the desire for one day to behold him, I might almost say the feeling of envy with regard to those privileged mortals who contemplated the Son of Man under his form of servant. That we should feel and speak thus upon the impulse of the moment is conceivable, and may be forgiven, but how can we on reflection use such language ? And how far it shows us to be from a full understanding of the gospel !

“ Oh, how strong we should be could we but see Jesus Christ.” Alas ! how many did see him, see him at their leisure, and yet remained weak !

There are things that it is better not to say, if they are likely to lead into error, or give offence to one single sincere person.

The things that are above are not precisely the things of another world, but the things of a different sphere to the habitual one of our thoughts ; they are not things above our heads, but above our natural feelings. . . . They are the dispositions of a heart renewed by the Spirit from above ; they are all the sentiments, motives, and impulses that become a regenerated soul. To love the things that are above is to love God himself ; to submit our life to him, to seek and find God in all things.

My God! shall we never feel that we are all, in a different sense from Jesus Christ, set for the fall and rising again of many; and that whether we will it or not, we beget lives like our own? Oh, if we could follow with our eyes, in the present and the future, that posterity to which our examples give birth, if we could but count the souls that during our life, and those that after our death, will have a right to claim descent from us, and to impute to us in great part their character and destiny,—with what terror should we be seized, with what fresh need of throwing ourselves into the arms of God's mercy, but also with what holy emulation and what joyous hope!

God gives nothing absolutely, except himself. All the rest is only lent, intrusted by him. Nothing is your own but God himself, and you yourselves belong but to him; and you will not—oh! most cruel of all madness!—you will not be his, or have him yours!

There is a sacrilege of every-day occurrence: we rob our Creator of ourselves! Oh! this it is that makes, even in chosen souls, the deep and general degeneracy of the human family. This is the seal of our reprobation, that we forget for what and for whom we have been sent into the world.

To live is to accomplish a work that shall endure; to gather together something more than vain memories; to convert all one's present into future; to prepare one's death; to make it beforehand triumphant, glorious, full of immortality,—to live is to conduct one's-self on earth as a citizen of heaven.

If persecution brings with it graces of which peace is ignorant, it has also dangers that peace does not know. In the tumult and dust of the combat, the forms of objects get effaced or change; the mind becomes excited, and the flesh exasperated; and if one side or hemisphere of the truth be then discovered to us, it is much to be feared that the other is veiled. Given for a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men, but above all to our own selves, we shall perhaps have difficulty in guarding ourselves from pride.

Wonderful fact! We may be sure that those from whose mouths we most frequently hear the name of God, are, generally speaking, those who think least of the Supreme Being.

Do not be too hard upon the narrow man; he is narrow only through severity towards himself. Respect the motive while blaming the effects; prefer anything to indifference, and impute to the narrow but conscientious man all the affections that he has not, but would have did his conscience permit him, and will have so soon as he shall know them to be just and necessary. That moment has not yet come for him.

A Christian is a man who has wept and been consoled, who weeps still daily, but is daily comforted by his God. His happiness is not without tears; his memories keep their source open, and painful experiences often come to enlarge it. But his happiness is happiness for all that,—a profound

happiness, which entirely fills the soul; for it is composed of peace, hope, and love, and the holy tears of compunction fall on it like dew. If he wept not, he would require your pity. It is when that fountain dries up that true misfortune begins.

The truth, properly conceived of, ought to have one or other of two contrary effects: to plunge us into utter despair, or boundlessly to console us; to make us quite happy or quite miserable.

He who believes but in Jesus glorified, knows nothing; he who believes in Jesus humbled, annihilated, knows all.

Can there then be only one way of giving glory to the truth? Is the most direct in every way the best? And is not living speaking also?

I know not what insipid soul and factitious life are constantly threatening to take the place of our own life and soul. I know not what magic force makes us welcome as the spontaneous inspiration of our conscience, and defend with the warmth of conviction, systems and formulas which have sprung up externally to us from the conflict of ideas and the course of events. We observe, imitate, repeat, and we mistake this for experiencing.

THIRD SECTION.

HISTORICAL CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH.

I. ITS NATURE.

1. *Importance of the Question.—Definition ; Society and Schools ; the Parish.*

THE question of the Church is that not of the day only, but of the age. We meet with it everywhere, and everywhere in the first class of those questions from the solution of which society expects its fate. The world, that has halted around this problem, will set out again on its march so soon as it is solved. Each great epoch has its own Gordian knot ; this is ours. In default of a better method, the sword will be called into play ; the knot will be cut, we would fain have untied it. It is to this that our efforts tend, others than we are ready to take up the sword.

“The form does not give the life.” Absolutely, and as a general thesis, this is true : the form does not give the life. But besides the fact that the form is the fulcrum, the subject, and in a manner the theatre of the life, it is certain that some forms are

less, and others more adapted to life's preservation and development. Monsters are short-lived; the excessive tenuity or excessive volume of any organ renders vital functions either difficult or precarious. In the organic world there is no exception to this law; there cannot be any in the moral world.

It is remarkable that the very advances the gospel makes, may, in the long run, threaten the Church; the fact is, that if they create outside of her a life, a movement, an activity that is not found within her,—if everything there be monotonous and constrained, those things will inevitably be looked for where they may be found; the fact is, that they who desire to prevent the hive from *swarming* must allow the bees to make honey; if the expatriation of the Christian be deprecated, his *metropolis* must be made dearer and more attractive to him than any colony.

A Church is a society of believers; we cannot yield this point without falling into contradictions. A Church has only the consciousness of its nature and its reality in so far as it knows itself to be composed of believers.

By this word, *Society*—offensive to some,—this is what we understand: Each Christian is directly taught of God; no one has dominion over his faith; he himself derives this faith from God's Word, and depends for the interpretation of that Word upon the Holy Spirit alone. The Church is a society; or, if it be a school, the schoolmaster is God himself.

We can only maintain in its purity, and rationally admit the notion of the Church as a school, by rejecting the idea of this school being the institution of the scholars. We must revert to a higher origin. We must admit a divine institution of the first preceptors, and next, an authentic and uninterrupted succession, in virtue of which the last of the teachers is equally authoritative as the first. Such is the Catholic system, or rather dogma, according to which the immediate word of God continues in the Church without interruption or diminution, the clergy being its organ, and pronouncing, either by the lips of their head, or by the decrees of their assemblies, what are the oracles of the Holy Spirit. Such is the Church viewed as a school. There is no society here; but there is a community, formed by God himself, with reference to the interests of religion; maintained by him and governed by him, without active concurrence of its own. In such a system, it is the clergy who are called the Church; but a clergy receiving from God infallible instructions, to which the community can but submit, since this submission is of faith, forms part of the religion, sums it all up indeed, and constitutes Catholicism. There is a permanent miracle presupposed in a system like this.

The Church, in any other than the Catholic point of view, is necessarily a society. Once at least it was a society, and having been so once, it always is so. It always is so, unless indeed its chiefs have since

that time received Divine unction,—unless God has authentically substituted powers, emanating from himself, for the powers they had received from men. The Church is still a society in principle, even when it has ceased to be so in fact; nay, it cannot even be one in principle without more or less being one in fact; there must be something that proves that it has been a society, and may again become such. Otherwise, deprived both of miraculous and spontaneous action, not only would it no longer be a society, but not even a community, except in the coarse sense of all the individuals that compose it having to bear the same yoke, and being stricken by the same incapacity.

The Church, when assembling for the first time, must apparently have known why it assembled; this could not have been in order to become a Church, but because it was a Church already. It was because the men of which it was composed held certain religious principles in common. These principles or dogmas were either written by the Church or not. She did not write them if it were possible that, owing to the small number of her members, she felt no need of doing so; and yet even in the smallest communities that need makes itself felt, and gets satisfied sooner or later. We can adduce proofs of this. Be that as it may, however, if the Church did write her principles, this was a social act,—an act which for ever constituted her a society, inasmuch as she once was so; even though she may

never subsequently have repeated any social action, but have allowed herself to be ruled and governed at will, still she is not less what she was ; and what she wrote—I mean her symbolism—necessarily proves and recalls the fact. But at the same time, it is all that does prove the fact. It alone constitutes the Church. One might even say that it is the Church itself—the Church written. After all the other elements of the idea of the Church have vanished, this remains behind ; and, strictly speaking, and for a time, it suffices. Certain it is, then, that in the presence of a symbolism there is no denying the Church, the Church as a society.

The Church could not be the means of the formation of the Church ; before having herself spoken, it was necessary that God should speak to convoke her ; and he did so in communicating himself directly to certain individuals, which doubtless constitutes an immediate action. Even after the foundation of the Church, God did not renounce that method of communication. There was a Church when St. Paul was converted or warned on his road to Damascus ; and so long as there were miracles, there was immediate action, “external to and independent of the means of grace intrusted to the Churches by the Lord.”

What is the parish ? It is a family, and a family has only one father. This is tantamount to saying that the parish is only under the jurisdiction of one pastor, and that there are as many parishes as there

are pastors. It seems to me that this system has no need to be defended. In the contrary system the parish has no moral existence; a community which has two or three pastors has none.

The Church, with relation to and in presence of the world, is the depository, and even the deposit, of certain principles, for the application of which each parish has been founded. The Church is, properly speaking, the gospel on earth: Jesus Christ among men, the Holy Spirit governing and uniting the faithful. It is this which characterizes and defines the Church, exhausts the notion of it, and makes of a parish a church. A parish is only worthy of the name of Church, by the recognition and maintenance of principles, in virtue of which and by which the Church herself exists.

The parish is but the place where an evangelical ministry exerts itself, according to all these principles, and not in opposition to them; the universal Church is the communion existing between all who profess and love these principles; and if it be not this, it is nothing. In the spiritual order, the parish being our family, its principles are our country.

Religious association, a common cult, suppose an agreement, a coinciding of minds on some fundamental points of doctrine, and, above all, the union of hearts in a common affection; but they permit divergencies on all points that leave the foundation intact; they prescribe on such points neither dis-

simulation nor silence ; I go further, I say that they demand, in their own interest, the frank expression of those divergencies.

The first interest of the religious community is the culture of conscience itself ; seeing that it is nothing if it be not an association of consciences, and if it do not incessantly renew its life from the very source whence it drew it first.

The true medium of a religious society is liberty. Liberty, which serves as a pretext or occasion to many aberrations, is nevertheless, in point of fact, the only pledge of truth, order, and moderation. In this marvellous atmosphere, whatever is false corrects or destroys itself.

Sociability, which is something better than an appetite, less than an affection, other than a virtue, and which yet partakes of all three, has its own place in the horizon of Christian thought ; and we look upon it as *action in common*, and as *enjoyment in common*.

2. *The Church and the Individual.*

Does the Church make Christians, or are they made by God through means of the Church ? This second opinion is the only one admissible from the Protestant point of view.

When, in the noontide of a burning day, your strength and even your life failing through the tortures of thirst, you come upon a river's course, and a draught, a drop perhaps, from its waves

restores and revives you, you bless that drop of water; it is that which has refreshed you, not the river; you have not drunk the river, and yet is it not the river which brought you that saving drop, and could you have drunk it but for the river? Where would it have been but in sand, which would have absorbed it, twenty leagues, it may be, away. That mass of water that you have not drunk was needed to bring you the draught that you might drink; thus, all things considered, it is the stream that has saved you.

In like manner, in a Catholic sense, it is the Church that saves you, because it is she who brings you Jesus Christ. Far from us be the Catholic error, according to which it is the Church that believes in God, each Christian believing in the Church. We rejoice to maintain that the relations of the believer with the living water, which is Christ, are immediate; but the Church, that is to say, the Christian community in the succession of centuries, is the torrent or stream which brings down to you the name and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and, so to speak, Jesus Christ himself. Without the Church, no Christianity and no Christians. . . . The very book that contains these things, changes, forgets itself, or perishes; and without an ever new revelation, an incessantly repeated miracle, you remain in ignorance and death. The Church by its mass and weight forms a current which flows down to you, bears to each one of you that word, that name, that

invisible element, which, incorporating itself with you, will renew all your being.

The gospel can only be spiritualistic, and is a gospel only on this condition. All others rob it of this character; for all others deny in principle what Jesus Christ has established at so vast a cost,—the immediate relations of man with God. The glorious liberty of the children of God is—to employ language less lofty—religious individuality.

There are two ways of conceiving Christianity: either as the reign of visible authority, or as the reign of the Holy Spirit. The former of these systems does not, it is true, exclude the Holy Spirit, but it fetters him, suffers him not to blow whither he listeth; the second replaces him in possession of his sovereign and essentially divine freedom. The former in some sort monopolizes him; the second makes his divine influences the inheritance and property of all. The former says, “The Church is taught of God, believe what it believes;” the latter declares, “Ye are all taught of God.” In the first system the Church is an authority; in the second an aid.

The Church itself is a true society only inasmuch as the individual has made use of his liberty to associate himself, and preserves his liberty in association.

We do not apply the word *individual* to sentiments that no one can understand or share; *individual* is not synonymous with *exceptional* and *exclusive*. Individuality and sympathy are two equally

indispensable conditions of a religious society, which is a society of sentiments; nay more, sympathy and individuality reciprocally condition each other; for there can be no true sympathy where there is a lack of individuality; and individuality only manifests itself by sympathy, which is the preference of the heart. In joining himself to a purely religious society, no one has had the intention or the idea of ceasing to be himself, neither has any one actually ceased to be so; for this society is only religious in the sense of being composed of religious individuals, who have placed in common what they had in common, each one reserving to himself the rest.

It does not pretend to be religious of itself, as a society, and, so to speak, independently of the individuals which compose it; it has not made them what they are, but it is they that have, and incessantly are making it what it is; in a word, it is the individuals who are religious, and not the society.

The high-sounding words of anarchy and individualism neither awe nor alarm me. "What," I am asked, "is to become of a society of believers where each professes private views?" Why, what is that to me, provided their individual professions be sincere? I in my turn ask, "What becomes of a spiritual society from which liberty is banished?" I ask, "What, in a system of reservation and afterthoughts, becomes of truth, the first of all interests,—truth, for which alone a spiritual society is suffered to exist?"

Anarchical, say you ; and wherefore then ? Ah ! be sure such a society would escape anarchy from the very fact of having given itself for centre the great principle of absolute sincerity. This principle alone would serve it as a religion, if such a principle could exist independently of religion. But why should society reside only in an abstract belief ? Why should there not be in the midst of variety of opinion, a kernel of doctrine, a fundamental idea, in which all may heartily agree, and as to which they are all one ? Will order never be conceived save under the form of a despotism, and liberty under the features of a wild unsociability ?

I believe in institutions as much as it is possible to do ; and what in them delights me most is the aid they lend to the education of minds. It is something for the eye always to see objects at a certain angle ; and it is much for the mind to live habitually in an atmosphere of fairness and equity. Reason, when realized, is doubly reason for those who believe in it, and for others is only reason from the moment that it is thus realized ; only let it be allowed me not to seek in any institution for the germ of the new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness.

Belief is individual, religion is not. God could not have made a religion for any one man, nor for each man. True religion is not an individual truth, but a human,—a truth for all men. And if you have a religion which does not permit you to share in the worship of many, you may either conclude

that you *alone* possess the truth, or that you do *not* possess it.

We are only bound to accept that of which we are internally convinced ; this I grant ; and I therein recognise the basis of our intellectual operations. But if this be a true principle, here is another fact of human nature which is no less so. Man is not constituted in such a manner as to allow of each one, without any help from others, forming his own personal conviction on every subject. We always see ordinary minds group themselves around some superior intelligence, and receive law and impulse therefrom. No doubt, the opinion to which we attach ourselves seems, in the first instance, to belong entirely to ourselves ; but let us take the trouble to go back to the historic source from whence it flows, and we shall almost invariably see that this individual opinion has in great part sprung from some already received opinion.

Is there here anything to humble us ? I do not know : anything to discourage us ? I think not.

It is the Church of authority which isolates individuals, and has created individualism.

Men too much forget that Christianity bears within itself the remedy for the evil which it may occasion. If it possess such social virtue that it alone, among all religions, has founded a Church, it at the same time, and by this very fact, has made a larger addition, and rendered a more complete homage to the principle of human individuality than any reli-

gion or any philosophy. This element of individuality, at once glorified and purified by Christianity, is employed by Providence for two opposite purposes: it is profitable to society, by making of it a harmonious concourse of free wills, and giving to the social tie the character and energy of a living clasp; and, on the other hand, being the centrifugal force of society as well as the centripetal, it prevents the centre from absorbing everything, just as the balance of these two forces in the physical universe, alike launching the worlds into space and retaining them in determined orbits, has not permitted them, while gravitating around a centre, to become one tremendous mass and confused chaos. Individuality, constantly excited and awakened by true religion, will everywhere prevent that brute conglutination which threatens to absorb public liberty in threatening to absorb power; it will be able to divide as rapidly as they form, and to balance religious majorities by minorities sufficiently strong or sufficiently numerous to make head against the most compact masses.

The Catholic Church is only a school, and the Christian Church is a society.

3. *Its Mission, End, and Relation to Christianity.*

The Church is an association which has action for its end. The Church aims at producing in some, and keeping up in others, the noble fire of devotedness to God's cause, and zeal for eternal interests.

It aims at creating in nature a higher life than that of the body, or even that of the mind. It desires to keep constantly kindled our enthusiasm for all that is good, laudable, and generous. Its prosperity, then, consists in living, acting, and even in fighting.

Christ is still here below. Christ is still contained in mortal flesh, his glorious resurrection has snatched him from the power of the grave, his glorious ascension from the gaze of earth,—all is accomplished, for the work done by him is sufficient for all. But Christ succeeds to himself in the person of the Church. The Church is a body whose head is in heaven. The Church militant has inherited the condition of the humbled and suffering Christ. Here below it represents its divine head as the Son of Man, and will so represent him till the end of time. Doubtless it is to Jesus Christ only what the body is to the head, which last communicates movement to it and determines all its actions ; but it is not less narrowly united to Jesus Christ than the head is to the body ; it does nothing of itself indeed, but it does through him all that he has done upon earth ; it carries on his work, but only by him and for him ; it is the whole body, but it is not the head. And while the Master, Jesus Christ, reigns as head in the peace and glory of heaven, the body, which is the Church, remaining on earth, suffers there all that Jesus Christ would suffer were he on earth still ; for having the same spirit, invoking his name, waging the same war with error and with sin, it must needs

have the same enemies, meet the same obstacles, excite the same enmities, and undergo the same passion. It must do all this, else it is not the Church. The agony of Jesus Christ must continue in the person of the Church, or there is no Church; the head being living, the body must live; and living upon earth live a terrestrial life,—in other words, suffer. This is what still remains behind of the afflictions of Christ; this is the sign that his work is being carried on upon earth; this is the burning but glorious seal that the Master impresses on those who are his; this is the method by which the Church may correspond with its head; and we may here observe that the term which St. Paul employs does not simply signify to *fill up*, but also to *correspond*; it is in continuing the work of Jesus Christ to render back to him what we have received from him. Christ is the victim of the Church, and the Church is the victim of Jesus Christ. The Church, moreover, is the servant of Jesus Christ; if she did not suffer, neither would she act, for she cannot act without suffering; and if she did not act she would not correspond with her Head, she would not serve her Master, who, on his side, would seem to forget or to disavow her. Under all these heads there remains, and till the end of time will remain, something to be filled up of the afflictions of Jesus Christ; not, doubtless, of those personal afflictions which are complete in every respect, but those that he has resolved, if we may so speak, to bear till the end of time in the

person of believers. Do not attribute to the body anything that exclusively belongs to the head ; do not impute to the afflictions of the body the redeeming merit and virtue which belong only to the sufferings of the head ; you are right in this ; but let the body which is the Church enter into a community of love and sufferings with the head, which is Jesus Christ.

The Church is the continual revealer of truth : it can add nothing to the principle ; but in the sense of development, of application, of result, it has ever to act, to advance. If the gospel had said all that could be said, there would be no need of preaching.

The Christian Church is the true society of peace ; and with the efforts of this divine institution, Providence has, in our opinion, made concur a science, the principles of which, once adopted, will be of incalculable importance to the peace of the world ; it will be seen at once that I am speaking of political economy.

If there be a general providence for the governments of the world, there is a special providence over the destinies of the Church. Object of the eternal complacency of him who has saved her, he keeps her as "the apple of his eye ;" defends her against enemies from without and within ; protects her even where he seems to yield her to the fury of her adversaries. Physician equally enlightened and loving, he applies painful remedies according as they are needed ; but it is then that the re-animated Church

witnesses with most lustre to the force and life that are in her; and the groans that she utters upon earth re-echo as songs of triumph in heaven. While dynasties and empires melt and flow away like torrents, alone amid their foaming waves the rock of the Church stands firm; a powerful hand, which disdains to save human things from their doom of mortality, lovingly sustains the Church of the Crucified, and the catastrophes which most profoundly convulse the soil of society respect that eternal religion, which has nothing to fear from the inconstancy of opinions and the course of centuries. Nay, this is not enough. Such is the love with which she is loved, that all things in the world are subordinated to her interests, to her final triumph; it is for her that the world still subsists; it is by her that it is preserved from the ever imminent wrath of the just Judge. A world in which there was no longer a Church, no longer any friends of God, no more souls to win over to the Lord, would be an objectless creation, which could not subsist for an instant, and that nothingness would eagerly devour. With what love then is the Church loved, since, once effaced from earth, earth would be effaced from the universe, and since present in the world it preserves and sustains that world.

The misfortune of Christianity and of the Church is that hypocrisy should receive a sanction from a crowd of respectable people, according to the standard of the world, who, unbelieving or indifferent in

heart, perform acts that should only belong to piety and devotion—acts regarding the value of which there is scarcely any mistake—but which, tolerated as they are, passed into usage, fused into manners and customs, inflict in all spheres whatever, mortal injury on public morality.

II. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH.

1. *Its Constitution.*

An ecclesiastical body without doctrine is in most cases an illegal thing; for if it remount to the origin of its powers, it finds a doctrine there. It is for this, and by this, that it was instituted; and whatever the advance of *public opinion* may have subsequently been, it has had no power to make any changes in the condition under which this body exists; doctrine is still its title, and its only title to existence.

An ecclesiastical body without doctrine is an imaginary entity, a pure chimera. Always this body will divide, will fall into fractions through theological opinions. Always in discussions apparently the most unconnected with dogma, dogma will be found; and a purely administrative affair will be a controversy in disguise.

Let it be asserted, in any circle whatever, whether ignorant or learned, believing or sceptical, that there is an ecclesiastical body which on principle is neither Arian nor orthodox, rationalist nor supernaturalist, Pelagian nor Calvinist, Catholic nor Protestant, but

all these in turns, according to the breath of public opinion ; a body, consequently, whose only symbolism is to have none,—this would appear too strange to be believed.

The most extreme latitudinarianism only frees some to fetter others, since positive beliefs crave expression, and to keep them silent is to deny them.

If it has been conscientiously believed that it is possible to interpret the gospel in a deistical sense, the Church may be conscientiously governed in this sense. Lying image of Christianity, such a government as this re-unites all tendencies in its breast, not as in a focus where all the coloured rays blend in one same pure light, but as in an arena, where meeting is only a prelude to mutual defiance and combat.

The conscience of a Church is its faith,—is the life that this faith develops, the liberty that this life needs ; it is, in a word, that which makes a Church to be a Church, and without which it is an anomaly for which there is no designation in any language.

2. *Confession of Faith ; its Necessity, Origin, Dangers, Abrogation, and Re-establishment.*

Everywhere where the Church shall have some reality, that is to say, some life, a symbolism will exist in its midst ; and the kind of syncretism which attributes an equal value to all beliefs, will invariably denote a scepticism with which religious life is irreconcilable.

Truths through which we are Christian, and outside of which we are not; truths, the frank profession of which in word and deed distinguishes, and ever will distinguish, in the eyes of all Christians, a true brother in Christ; truths, not one of which can be suppressed without dealing a blow to the heart of Christianity; truths, finally, with which are connected, and without which lack basis all the more special doctrines of which more detailed formularies are composed—it is these, as we think, that should exclusively constitute the symbolism of the people of the Church.

Every Church that does not confess its faith has none; every people, where it is made a point of principle to conceal religious convictions, cannot be a truthful people; for candour on the subject of religion is the starting-point of candour on all others.

Truth saves itself, and needs not the article of a formulary; it belongs to it to create symbols, not to symbols to create truth. But if the abandonment of symbols implies the abandonment of the truth, we cannot hold the former cheap without depreciating the latter also. Now, if we desire to be kept by the truth, we on our side must keep it.

Confessions of faith that have sprung from the divisions of the Church respecting the meaning of the Bible were, in the first instance, a defensive treaty of alliance, later a rallying point, and in all times a valuable support to lean on, a precise document to refer to. They are all this, but nothing more.

Symbolism is the result of solicitude for the Bible, of a desire to fix its true meaning, and to preserve its teaching in all its purity. Only, in the case of symbolism, this interpretation is removed from the caprices of popular opinion, and the arbitration of the ecclesiastical body.

It is almost inevitable that each should esteem his own symbolism perfect; his exegesis without fault, as without fraud. But take facts in their totality, and man for what he is, I am little disposed, for my part, to allow such a claim on the part of any one whatsoever. I will not say that "God is greater than our heart," and that divine truth will always overflow us; but I will insist upon saying that something constantly escapes through the cracks of the earthen vessel; that some imperceptible remnant of impurity invariably, in ever so slight degree, sours the divine fluid; and that, in things of this order, such is the intimate union, the mutual reaction of heart and mind, that when we have not all the life, we have not all the truth either.

Far from me, however, be the thought that the purest and most enlightened among Christians has but a reflex, or a shred of Christianity, or that among those who lay claim to the name there is only a difference of more or less. Those who have grasped Christianity by the centre, or by the root, are morally at the antipodes of those who have grasped it by some of its branches, or its extremities.

So long as symbolism is only an abstraction

external to him who proclaims it, a truth learnt by heart and not by the heart, we much prefer to such a lifeless, impersonal, and as yet soulless truth, an error, yes, a sincere error, an error that is honestly believed in; such an error has more claim to the name of truth than truth itself before we are identified with it. We are especially led to say and feel this, at an epoch when by a contradiction,—natural enough, we own,—there are so many doctrines and so few convictions.

The abrogation or change of any symbolism can hardly, I think, take place, except by means of a revolution, for a symbolism is a constitution.

A civil government is a bad guardian of symbolism; and when the aggregate of a clergy, and perhaps the whole of a Church, have forsaken a confession of faith, the minority, which demands the introduction of authority in favour of it, requires a thing almost morally impossible. . . . Orthodoxy is not to be restored authoritatively, and decrees have no hold upon ideas.

3. *Multitudinism; Discipline; Church Form.*

We love the visible Church, and nothing that can be said in its favour can displease or disappoint us, provided that it in no way infringes on the glorious liberty of the children of God, or attributes to the visible Church any *magical* virtue, against which we should protest with all our might.

We are not Christians because we have been inscribed and enrolled in a Christian community ; and Jesus did not come to earth to found parishes, but a Church.

The Church, I mean the visible Church, is composed of all those who, of spontaneous will, have resolved to form part of it. The Church is a body of which no one is a member by the fact of his birth ; to which no one is counted to belong before he has declared his intention of doing so ; and upon the doctrines of which no one has the right to act directly, unless he offer to the Church guarantees that she alone, as a Church, is in a condition to appreciate.

Bellarmino, when it was represented to him how many dead members his system included in the Church, answered confidently, " They are dead, it is true, but they are members all the same." Now, in point of religion, dead members are not members. They are strangers who have wandered into a country of which they can neither learn the language, the laws, nor the manners. They have no public spirit, no zeal for this strange land ; no means of serving it, or sharing in the advantages that it offers to its true children.

A Church of multitude is one of which we may become a member without having previously undergone an examination of conscience on the part of any one whatever. This ranges the so-called State Churches under the head of Churches of multitude ;

but what distinguishes from State Churches that particular Church of multitude that we have in view, is spontaneity, liberty of choice, personal accession, above all, the abolition of the fatal formula : *cujus regio, hujus religio*. It must not be contended that in default of political authority there will be that of example, family tradition, force of education. No doubt all this, actually if not theoretically, does restrain the liberty of the individual, and the independence of his choice. But there is one capital difference, this namely, that henceforth the quality of believer is completely separated from that of citizen ; that between them there is no longer any recognised or assumed solidarity ; that the fiction of a believing State is no longer there to keep alive in men's minds that materialistic prejudice against which Jesus Christ protested with divine eloquence beside Jacob's well ; that religion is put once more into possession of the spiritual character of which nationalism inevitably deprives it ; that whatever may be the power of facts, the principle at least remains intact, and, constantly overpowered by our carnal tendencies, constantly revives and reclaims its rights.

I am a *multitudinist*, in the sense of absolutely rejecting all pretension to penetrate into the interior of human consciences, and to exercise a judgment which belongs to God alone. This pretension seems to me absurd, presumptuous, dangerous ; without support from Scripture, or from the history of the apostolic Churches. But it is very true that the

Church of individual examination is a *society*, that the exclusive notion of a *school* throws Protestants back into the Catholic system, and that this system, having necessarily for form a unique fact, one is forced, so soon as one rejects the idea of a society, to embrace exclusively that of a school,—either to renounce all hope of forming a Church, or to re-enter the pale of the Church of Rome.

The Church is pre-eminently a spiritual society; this is its fundamental character, since this is its end; it is destined to unite spirit to spirit, and all of them together to the Father of spirits. Their visible union is not an *end*, but only a *necessity*, imposed by the organization of the human being. The body, in itself and for itself, does not require this association. A religious society is an assemblage of spirits, who, as a matter of course, bring their bodies with them, and, indeed, can have no mutual contact save by means of these bodies. But the common bond of these spirits is a common faith; this is so completely the basis of their association, that the Church, in its ideal state, only includes believers, the converted, the elect; and that further, in this ideal state, it repels the distinction of visible and invisible Church, seeing that all the members of the former are equally supposed members of the latter also. Now this ideal, it is evident, cannot be realized in any system. All possible systems ally believers with unbelievers, the elect with the reprobate, true members with false brethren, spirits with bodies.

None of these systems has any right to an exclusive preference ; all are defective, all are admissible. None entirely accomplish their object ; all do so in part ; and all that there is in them, all of sincere, pure, and spiritual, unites to form, above all visible enclosures and compartments, the true universal Church ; *one* already, even on earth, in spirit, prayer, desire, as it will in heaven be visibly one in peace, perfection, and glory. The leader of this Church here below, its standard-bearer, its grand master, is the Spirit of God, which instructs it in each of its members. Before we can have recourse to any other system of unity, we must depose the Holy Spirit. If this Spirit have been given, it is the living authority, the infallible interpreter, the inextinguishable tradition of all the faithful throughout all ages.

Discipline is the morality of the Church, as such.

Morality is the consequence of dogma ; it is dogma put into practice. Discipline is the consequence of doctrine ; it is doctrine practised in the ecclesiastical sphere.

One may, or rather one ought, to take account of circumstances in discipline, exactly in the same sense and same manner as one takes account of them in morality. The form changes, the principle remains.

There are immutable principles in morality, and in discipline also ; or rather, morality and discipline are alike immutable. All we have to do, is to dis-

tinguish the form or accident from the fundamental or the essential.

It is regarding this distinction that one differs and contends.

No doubt that the apostles would, if they could, have extended the salutary severities of discipline to the lukewarm, the selfish, the formal, to such as have a name to live and are dead ; but they limited them, as every one knows, to scandalous offenders ; and in conforming ourselves to their practice, we shall never run any risk of introducing arbitrariness or injustice into the government of the Church.

III. CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

1. *By the Laity.*

Although in the Church, as elsewhere, there is division of labour, no labour is degrading ; no work derogatory ; rather the most humble are the most noble ; we are no true servants of Christ when we aim at only serving him afar off, and on a grand scale, and every true Christian “ aspires to descend.”

Nothing in the gospel authorizes us to consider that any believer is more deprived of the right to watch over the interests of the Church as such, than in a free country any citizen is from guarding the interests of the republic ; on the contrary, the whole history of the best times of the Church abounds in instances to the contrary, and in accordance with the principle which makes of the Christian Church

a people of priests and apostles. . . . On the other hand, it would be a great misapprehension of the interests of the Church, and even of its nature, if one were to count for nothing those indirect services which are within the reach of all alike, and which are the most important. What are these indirect services? Nothing else than innocent conduct, a life of self-denial, a habit of charity. In default of, or rather, above all other means, we must depend upon these.

2. *By the Civil Power.*

The Church is a spiritual work, the glory, the condition, the very essence of which is to continue spiritual. The Church in gospel times is the true ark of the Lord, which will not be supported by an arm of flesh. Now every human arm is doubtless not an arm of flesh. The arm of flesh is only that whose impulse and principle of movement is not spirit and liberty. Money becomes spiritual in spiritual hands; spirit grows material in the very thought of the carnal man. If the good intention of Uzziah was reprovèd because his anxiety betrayed a weakness of faith, what value can Jesus Christ set upon assistance that does not manifest, does not even profess, any spiritual principle?

The laity has, no more than the civil government, the right to govern the Church.

An assembly of believers may indeed name its minister; an assembly of citizens may well elect its

deputy ; but an aggregate of individuals of all varieties of opinion is not competent to choose a pastor.

By what miracle could a doctrine, which to the natural man is *foolishness* (1 Cor. i. 21), be, without reserve or difficulty, the doctrine of all the separate individuals inhabiting the same country ? Eternal object of sorrow and joy, the cross is no less for a large number of men, and in all ages, an eternal subject of offence and alarm. History and Psychology enable us to understand how, upon the recommendation of centuries, under the empire of benefits received, and of a secret force which truth exerts over the conscience, multitudes should have adopted Christianity, and made of it an integral portion of their political establishment. So much it has been possible to obtain, but never will a Christian symbol be successfully adapted to the reason of all. When a confession of faith shall have been relieved from some secondary and Christianly controvertible clauses, that which remains (if indeed Christianity itself have not been subtracted) will retain all the acerbity of truth ; and the most popular of catechisms will not, in this respect, be more palatable to the taste than the most scholastic and most diffuse of symbols.

3. *Government by the Clergy.*

The clergy is not the Church ; the Church is made up of believers ; the Church ought to govern

herself; the preachers of the gospel are not its only ministers; there is not properly any *clergy* in an evangelical Church; it is the whole Church which is the clergy (*κληρος*), the inheritance of the Lord, the patrimony of Jesus Christ, or the property of God. Thus thought the apostles, who have never, in fact or in word, sanctioned the strange idea which concentrates in the functionaries, nay, in one single class of the functionaries of the Church, all the activity, all the attributes, all the duties, devolved on the whole body of believers. Thus felt, thus preached those ministers of the divine word, who, in the course of the seventeenth century, did so much honour to the *free* Reformed Church of France.

The gospel has effected one thing which is not sufficiently remarked.

Before the gospel, man only reached the Deity under the auspices of the priest. The gospel has suppressed the priest; the gospel denies the priest; the priest, as such, is contradictory to the gospel. There is, in one sense, only one priest, Jesus Christ; in another sense, there are as many priests as there are believers. But the priest, properly so called, such as the Jewish religion understood him to be, such as Roman Catholicism still does, is, in relation to Christianity, utter nonsense. In the new economy, means, appliances, are not abolished; man is still of use to man; and the Church is the means placed at the disposal of all; but the believer remains absolutely free and respon-

sible, so that in this respect, as in all others, he is justified in saying, "All things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." This signifies that the relations established between God and the believer, by him who calls himself the Mediator, are immediate relations, which before they never had been, never could be. Independently of the priest, whom we everywhere find, there was the nation, a species of priest, who, after having fashioned for himself a religion in its image, and for its purposes, imposed it, such as it was, upon private individuals. Shall we not add that there was also a whole system of material acts, whose virtue, quite objective, whatever might have been their original meaning and intention, determined the religious condition of the individual, in preference to immaterial facts, and substituted in the cultus the *doing* for the *being*, the body for the soul, and, so to speak, the act for the agent? Now the gospel has done away with all this; all this it has replaced by a worship in spirit and in truth, the first condition, as the first characteristic, of which is a frank, lively, and intimate personality. Wherever Christian worship has assumed another aspect, the fault is in man, not in the gospel; and there is not in that gospel a dogma, a precept, nor a page, that does not protest against it.

No man, God only, could lay down this principle or impose this law. This innovation is divine. The natural man is socialistic; every human religion is

so ; this is at once its weakness and its strength : its weakness if you regard principle ; its strength if you consider external results. The spontaneity, consistency, and, so to speak, sovereignty of the individual in matters of religion, are referable to a principle beyond the power of man.

The attributes of the *minister* are distinct, but have nothing absolutely exclusive. We are not to dispense with him when he is there, or when we can procure his presence ; we are to respect a division of labour that God himself has consecrated ; but if we were to pretend that there is any act, any single act whatever, which, being necessary in itself and urgent in the given case, could only be accomplished by the man we call pastor, so that, performed by any other member of the flock, that same act would be, properly speaking, null and void, we should have virtually re-integrated the Romish priesthood in the bosom of Protestantism, and under the modest name of ministers we should, in fact, have priests.

The diagonal is the favourite line of all assemblies convened for the purpose of deciding a case of conscience.

Nothing would be more mischievous in political or ecclesiastical matters than too homogeneous a body. Nothing would be more to be dreaded than a body entirely composed of what may be termed *experts*.

Every speciality exclusively cultivated, the theological speciality not excepted, leads to some narrow-

ness of ideas. The exceedingly special men of every kind, whose glance penetrates one particular point of a question, but only one, are much profited by the assistance and counsels of men less special, less profound, but more simple-minded, and, if I may so say, more universal.

A body, all the members of which are devoted to the same speciality, necessarily acquires something narrow in ideas and manners, and ends in no longer corresponding to general wants. It grows compact and tenacious as clay ; and just as in order to make of clay a soil favourable to vegetable life, we must mix it with sand, so in ecclesiastical bodies we must blend lay members with pastors, in order that the Church be faithfully represented and its general wants well understood.

Catholicism, in a certain sense, is a much more popular religion than Protestantism. The Catholic, I own, does not as a member of the Church perform *actions*, properly so called, but he makes *gestures*. He has an *amusing* religion, and one may say that this religion does, in point of fact, amuse the griefs, languors, and disasters of a crowd of unfortunates. Now, Protestantism is not amusing. Since, then, it does not amuse, it must occupy. Now in the system of the State Church, Protestantism does not occupy. Do not say that Christianity gives the Christian employment enough. This is true ; but take man such as he is, he is active : take religion such as it is, it is social. It is hurtful to remain entirely passive, in-

competent, eternally a minor in a Church which has refused itself the great resource of amusement. If it be desired that the flocks should interest themselves in the Church, they must be taken out of passivity ; and when they do interest themselves in their Church they will be nearer than is supposed to taking an interest in religion. The psychology of all this is commonplace, but incontestable. We say nothing of the question of right. Where is the right that ministers have to govern without the people ? “ Black men, whence come you ? ” The priest would know how to answer this question, but what can the minister reply to it ?

CHAPTER II.

SECTS AND PARTIES.

I. GENERAL REMARKS.

1. *Controversy.*

A RELIGION above or below controversy is a religion without results. A religion which finds nothing in man to fetter or to contradict is not a religion at all. If the presence of controversy be not of itself the *criterion* of the truth of a doctrine, a doctrine which excites no contradiction lacks one of the characters of truth. In the same way that the human body, placed in a temperature exactly the same as its own, feels no particular sensation, receives no impression good or bad, so is it with the soul to which a religion identical with its own dispositions is given for a medium. Such is natural religion : it leaves man as it finds him, and he in his turn leaves it as he found it ; the agreement is perfect, because the reciprocal action is null.

One is not sufficiently fortified against a doctrine when only acquainted with its weak sides.

Controversy may have disturbed friendships, superficial friendships perhaps ; reserve either does not

even permit the birth of friendship, or infallibly ends by stifling it.

We may deplore that condition of human nature which changes the blessed germ of peace into an occasion of war ; but we should have still more reason to lament if the cause of these unhappy effects did not exist ; if religion, being only a collective affair, were no longer an object of conversation and discussion betwixt men, and if under the deceitful pretext of a more intimate recollection and more profound peace it were relegated within the heart of each individual, and prohibited from showing forth and shedding itself abroad. We cannot doubt, spite of the hopes in which an erroneous spirituality indulges, that religion would die in this seclusion and this universal silence, and that by ceasing to be social it would eventually cease to be even individual.

The first step to take in any controversy—the only means of advancing any question—is to place every one in a condition to recognise and to classify himself. Nothing is more adverse to ultimate reconciliation than that confusion which lumps on one same side, under cover of superficial appearances, the friends and the adversaries of the same cause. Now to bring about this much needed classification we must in every question resort to first principles. It is there that we become conscious of the radical nature of a dissent, which till then had only seemed to reside in the sphere of application. If it were possible in every polemical disputation thus to return to the precise

point at which the angle opens, we should be surprised to find sometimes more dissension, and sometimes more agreement, than we had imagined.

2. *Party Spirit.*

Party spirit has graver errors than the systematic spirit.

Every cause, not excepting the holiest, is big with a party ; as every truth is big with an error. Honour and woe at once to such as claim to distinguish between the cause and the party.

Parties only do one thing at a time well.

All pious teachers have had the same religion and the same morality.

It is what appertains to the soul which tends to bring back unity among men.

3. *Certain Maxims ; Proselytism.*

It might perhaps be well to imagine ourselves advocates of the opinions that we are preparing to combat.

I should reproach myself almost as much for want of respect to an old thing as to an old man.

When we have to recall an insolent offender to his duty, and to maintain a menaced authority, we have not always a choice of language.

We must not sanction monstrous alliances under the name of conciliation. The siren was not the more perfect and beautiful for ending in a fish's tail.

Two adversaries equally enamoured of the truth, are less adversaries than allies.

Ah, yes! it is conceivable, it is beautiful, that charitable anxiety that some seek to blight by the name of proselytism; that tender severity that condemns us less than it pities; that generous importunity that harasses because it would rescue us: it is worthy of Jesus, that model of proselytism, who came upon earth to gather together and save that which was lost; worthy of God, who knocks at the door of our hearts, and beseeches us to be reconciled with him. But to take pleasure in seeing our brothers in danger—to condemn without pitying them, without helping; to triumph in a peril which threatens their eternity—God of love! is this the heart given by thee to man! is this man created in thy image! O how he has corrupted his nature; how unworthy he is of thee!

The conflict that arises between a minister and a sick person who rejects all religious assistance, is afflicting, but without danger; that which arises between two religions disputing over a proselyte is scandalous and mischievous.

II. DEVIATIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT.

1. *Fanaticism; Superstition; Mysticism.*

Under whatever form fanaticism may present itself, it is never the offspring of love. The love of

Jesus, that is to say, the love of truth and virtue, realized, can only lead you to virtue and truth. Be on your guard against imagination, pride, and self-will; these are the sources of fanaticism; but love without fear, so long as you limit yourselves to loving; loving Jesus Christ, you will do nothing contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ, and you will not be more fanatical than was Jesus himself.

Nothing more alien to true Christianity than superstition; for the former has created for conscience wants that conscience alone can appease. All the sacrifices and renunciations by which the superstitious would purchase peace and heaven are as nought to him who has comprehended the gospel, and knows that the peace of the heart can only spring from the heart, and that heaven is destined only for the soul that sacrifices itself.

Mysticism annihilates obedience; now religion is, first of all, obedience.

2. *Fantastic Piety; Asceticism; True and False Humility.*

When we have sacrificed all our accessory tastes, we are not unhappy so long as we can satisfy our dominant passion; indeed, the enjoyment that it gives becomes so much the more keen, that the soul, not surrendering itself to any other tendency, knows no diversion. Thus it may be safely affirmed that the happiest men, to speak secularly, are those who

have only one taste, and know how to subordinate everything thereto.

Feeble creatures as we are, let us then, once for all, recognise our feebleness ; let us not, in our hatred of formalism, — which is very hateful, I own, — go and madly reject the aids that God offers to our weakness ; let us not break the steps of the stairs in the chimerical and hazardous hope of taking longer strides ; let us value means for the very memory of our dependence that they wake, and the humiliation that they occasion.

No deceit is more certain than that which begins by deceiving the deceiver himself ; no snare is more infallible than that in which he who has set the snare has allowed himself to be caught. And for this reason it is that the insubordination of the heart, under the form of a more absolute and perfect submission, exercises such a strong seductive influence, and has so many involuntary partisans. Those who set the example are in some sort sincere impostors ; before deceiving others, they were themselves deceived. But by whom ? By their own hearts.

The precise descriptions left us by St. Paul will help us, for all future time, to recognise, under its manifold disguises, that false friend of the gospel, which, in presenting us with the image of a fantastic perfection, has no other aim than to lead us to despise, and consequently to neglect, the true perfection of the Christian life. This is the appearance

of will-worship, of humility, of a sacred contempt for the wants of the body.

Nothing, nothing whatever, in the most sublime progress of spiritual life can abolish obedience, and spiritual life cannot be progressing when obedience is on the decline ; the mark of progress is to obey better. Free will is one characteristic of the Christian, obedience is another ; they walk side by side, concur, grow with one growth. Freedom of the will increases with obedience, obedience with freedom of the will, for they have one common principle, and are but two forms of one same life.

There is no worship without obedience. Profusion of actions, diversity of practices, plenitude of sacrifices cannot avail here ; we do not employ our will to obey ; we find our whole self there, where self should have been lost. We protest against our dependence on our knees ; we raise ourselves thus high, not in order to draw nearer to our principle, but to be out of reach of the law ; we do more than it demands to avoid doing what it does demand. Everything seems good and easy to us except obedience.

When you see certain persons neglect duties within their reach, evident, acknowledged duties, and seek out others in a sphere that is not theirs, be very sure that it is because these sought out duties are, in point of fact, not duties at all ; these men feel a need either to occupy or to agitate their life ; and they will not spare themselves in so doing. It is not labour, sacrifice, danger, that is

repugnant to them, but law ; it is easier to them to be sublime than simply good.

There is a true and there is a false humility. By this last we do not mean a hypocritical humility, or a voluntary disguise of pride ; not so, but a humility which deceives itself by choosing its object ill. For if it be true that we cannot too much abase ourselves, this is not true with regard to all abasement, and he who abases himself indeed, but neither before God nor in God's name, does so improperly. I go further, we owe it to God himself ; we owe it to that very principle which leads us to humble ourselves before him, not to humble ourselves before any other. If every Christian be ready to acknowledge in himself the " chief of sinners ;" if every Christian, readily esteeming each of his brothers better than himself, seeks rather for the lowest place than the highest ; no Christian, on the other hand, will prostrate his dignity of man and Christian before a title or a fortune or a name. On the contrary, we shall recognise the Christian by the modest dignity of his manner, and the gentle freedom of his words, in presence of the rich and mighty of the earth. He who is intimidated by the appliances of greatness, the brilliancy of human glory, or even the superiority of talent and learning ; he who sees without being able to define what it is, in any man whatever, something more than man ; he who, in presence of some of those privileged ones of nature or fortune, annihilates himself in the demonstra-

tion of a servile obsequiousness ; such a one, if he be a Christian, conceals it very carefully, or rather, to speak out, what he so successfully conceals amounts to nothing.

Is it humility to persuade ourselves that we are a mere nonentity before God, not only as to works and feelings, but even in our nature, and that this God absorbs us incessantly, as we absorb the surrounding air at every breath we draw ? If it be humility as well as reason to confess that God's ways are not our ways, his thoughts not our thoughts, is it also humility to forbid ourselves to appreciate his dispensations according to the ideal of the good and the just with which he has inspired us, and, nevertheless, having done so, to go on exhorting each other to admire these dispensations as if we could do so without measuring them by some standard ? If it be humility to declare that we are saved by grace, and grace alone, and that God puts into us all the good he finds there, is it also humility to regard whatever passes within us, and whatever we do as indifferent, under pretence of preserving intact the doctrine of free salvation ? If it be humility to depend entirely upon the power of God, and to own that it is "when we are weak we are strong ;" is it also humility to interdict ourselves all free *action*, to lose ourselves in a passive and vacant contemplation, and to wait till God *impels* us to do his will, when we should confess that the first impulse of God is that which leads us to seek his will ? If it be humility to believe

ourselves equally blind and feeble, and to wait upon God for counsel as well as strength, is it also humility to renounce the employment of our own reason, to interrogate signs in heaven and on earth, as though conscience were not the first of signs ; or finally, to make, if I dare so speak, a mere fortune-teller of the Word of God ? If it be humility to acknowledge that the spirit of man, called in Scripture “ the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts,” is at the same time, as concerns salvation, blind and incapable of finding its way,—is it also humility to despise it where it is not despicable, and to neglect, under pretext of the abuse that might be made of them, talents, of which we must give account as of the rest, and which we ought only to use with thanksgiving ? If it be humility to acknowledge that what is great before man may be “ abomination before God ;” if it be humility to confess that in the kingdom of God the last shall be first, is it also humility to intrust indiscriminately to the ignorant or weak-minded, merely because they have faith, the most delicate spiritual interests and the government of the Church of Christ ? It is by making us go in all these respects beyond the requirements of humility, that the enemy introduces into our camp in order to devastate it, a thousand other enemies, and even pride. Even pride ? Ought we not rather to say especially pride ? For no two things come so near as false humility and pride ; to which add spiritual indolence, a sectarian spirit, fanaticism, you will still have

a very imperfect list of the evils to which this dangerous illusion leads. The absence of all consideration for the flesh is the last of the features that gives to false perfection an appearance of wisdom.

We are not made to abstain. There must ever be something enjoying, acting, living within us. The flesh will never cease to ask so long as the soul asks nothing. The soul has its delights, which we must not withhold from it, unless we wish it to throw itself in despair on the side of the flesh. Charity alone can guard us from carnal indulgence.

There is, consequently, in the kingdom of God, no sacrifice without compensation, and the compensations of God are infinite. There is therefore no want in our soul that God does not satisfy ; but he does so in his own way, that is to say, by giving us, instead of that coarse aliment that our mistaken hunger sought for, a purified aliment it knew not of.

Our religion is not merely a religion of detachment, for then it would not be a religion ; it is a religion of attachment or of love.

The first duty is to attach one's-self, detachment comes afterwards ; the chrysalis covering in which the butterfly was prisoned only breaks and falls away when the insect's wings have grown,—it is by opening that these burst their melancholy integuments. We only begin to detach ourselves from this world when we have learned to know something better. Till then, we are but capable of disappointment and weariness, which are not detachment.

The spirit of Christianity, which expresses the true destination of man, and his true relation with God, consists in this particular, in conceding nothing to necessity, and everything to the order of God ; so that each of our involuntary privations shall transform itself into a voluntary sacrifice, so that, in point of fact, we shall find ourselves to have given what we are believed to have lost ; given, I say, freely, by a principle of faith, obedience, and love. To be in this temper is what the gospel calls readiness to depart.

Certain souls, in spite of appearances, have not come really out from the world, and perhaps between them and openly worldly souls there is only this difference, that being as near danger as any one of the latter, they believe themselves further removed from danger, which this very error makes really more near.

To do what God does not require, precisely because he does not require it, to enter upon a certain way because he has not pointed it out, to go beyond his commandments, in order to be, if possible, no longer under his jurisdiction, to prescribe to one's-self difficult duties in order to have the pleasure of obeying self—this thorough will-worship, as St. Paul styles it—is not the worship of God but of an idol. This idol is the human *Ego*, which, although overthrown in the conscience by the cross of Christ, insists, in spite of its overthrow, on rearing itself again, and rises the higher the lower it has been cast down.

How may we characterize a useless devotion? Most certainly as a fatal devotion. There is nothing so terrible as the abuse of holy things; the greatest sinner is more hopeful than the formalist without piety; the soul of the former is grievously diseased, but at least the remedy has not lost its power.

It is not inconsiderately averred that the spirit of evil most willingly haunts the lovers of the extraordinary in religion, and that a former spirit of darkness returns, with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, into those pompously adorned dwellings (Matt. xii. 44, 45). No one has ever occasioned more deplorable scandals to the Church than these subtle and haughty spirits; no road has ever terminated in deeper abysses.

Those primary affections, those eternal instincts of nature without which life is not human life nor man man, and which, in consideration of our weakness, divide, so to speak, into several moderate distances the invisible ladder by which our soul rises to its supreme object—these affections, these instincts, have been denied by some, and, in as far as they could, destroyed. That this is an immense injury done to religion, taken in itself, is a fact that can be doubted by no true philosophers, who in all times have recognised two truths of equal importance: the one that the gospel, and the gospel alone, brings us back to nature; the other, that the gospel deals with real and complete men, not with phantoms under the name of men; that no one can be truly Christian

without being truly man, and that faith only bears good and genuine fruit in souls that are sincerely human.

Christ has been diminished in all ways by this unbelieving fervour ; diminished in his nature, dignity, and necessity ; diminished in his purity and sanctity. There is not one of these schools which has not by stretching to excess certain cords that ought to have remained loose, relaxed others which should have remained tense. There is not one of these schools which has not marked its way by the destruction or enfeeblement of some one of the fundamental truths of religion or morality.

When we see you multiply supererogatory works, we are tempted to believe that you have traversed without much notice the sphere of more immediate obligations. Will you allow me to speak out ? If you had only wished to enter upon this second province after having thoroughly ascertained the extent of the former, you would never have done so at all.

Christianity has never represented to us this body of ours as an arbitrary and troublesome appendage of the soul, not an essential portion of the man ; Christianity has done honour to the body in calling it to be " the temple of the Holy Ghost ;" Christianity admits the glorified body to share the destiny of the glorified spirit. It is not, therefore, against the body that it has declared war.

We must say to ourselves, and say to all, that if a false mortification be dangerous, the absence of

mortification is much more so, and that if rashness be culpable, cowardice is more culpable still.

3. *Sects ; Sectarian Spirit ; Unity ; Religious Sophistry ; Heresies.*

One attaches to the word *sect* a disagreeable and repulsive idea. A sectarian is in the eyes of the majority a half-crazed creature, whose very name awakens gloomy thoughts ; and yet who is there who does not form part of some sect or other ? Where is the society which is not subdivided into sects, amidst which each individual capable of feeling may make his choice and form his habits ?

Each coterie is a sect ; all partisans of the same political opinions form a sect ; all who are united by specially related views, feelings, desires, equality of rank, similarity of external circumstance ; seek each other out by preference ; love to associate, and in some measure isolate themselves from the rest of society ; these are so many sects.

We are all sectarians ; the great point is, not our exemption from this rule, but our spiritually dominating the sect of which we form part,—our making the essence prevail over the form. We can hardly succeed in this except by means of some inconsistency, or to speak more plainly, some decided contradiction ; for every sect contains an element of error, and we can only prevail over error by truth.

Death is the true name of unity without liberty.

The unity of the Spirit ! the unity of the truth ! How excellent and beautiful are these ! and how much should we not pardon to diversity when it brings out more vividly the communion of thought and affection between the servants of the same Master !

If even it were possible that one communion should have on its side the whole of dogmatic truth, it would not in consequence of this have the whole of practical truth. Truth under these two aspects will long, will perhaps always, be distributed in varying proportions between different religious communities ; one may be in some respects surpassed by another, and again in its turn surpass it in other respects.

Unity is only true where diversity is possible.

Truth in an absolute sense is a life. Now life is a complex fact. The obstinate overlooking of this maxim is the inexhaustible source of sects ; it reduces our pride to despair by forbidding to our analysis the ultimate nature and reality of things.

Christianity is a sect, and the true Christian, the spiritual Christian, is a sectary.

Man is naturally sectarian, even though truly great men may not be so ; the human mind only wants one thing at a time, it is at the mercy of vehement and exclusive genius ; two steps are taken forward, one backward,—such is its march. But do not let us, however, believe that serene and moderate temperaments lose their time and labour. Their day is coming, or rather, it is eternally their day. Let them be content not to receive the popular applauses

reserved for more passionate and more narrow intellects.

All that is equally profound is alike ; and if there be a religion so intimate and earnest as to echo in the last depths of our being, it must produce there essentially the same sound. Such is the nature of Christianity. No religion is more calculated to divide at the surface and narrowly to unite at the base. No religion can produce more sects ; none can maintain a closer unity between the really religious members of those sects. We must make up our mind to the one fact, and rejoice in the other ; we must trust to this secret and powerful principle of unity. We must not expect eventually to see only individuals in the religious sphere ;—always, and to the end of the world, the contrary fear will be far better grounded ;—rather must we, under the just apprehension of seeing some factitious agglomeration reproduced at every instant, avoid the coarsest and falsest of the forms under which that agglomeration might take place.

Life and diversity are strictly correlative in this domain. There is no life where there are no sects ; uniformity is the symptom of death.

True Christianity is the most powerful reaction against a false uniformity ; it is both, and alternately, a solvent and a cement.

There will always be narrow sects, and narrowness in all sects ; but I do not know whether, taking all things into account, there is anywhere so

much narrowness as in national sects. What is more common, in fact, in these pretended communities; and what can be more narrow, than to attach to quite external circumstances motives of security and earnestness of salvation?

Most certainly we do not see the aberrations of the religious sentiment without regret, but we cannot share the distress or the offence that too many feel at the spectacle of certain eccentricities. Our distress is more keenly elicited by other facts, which afford no public spectacle. What do we care for the macerations, the ecstasies, the dances, the convulsions of a few imperceptible sects? There is more of truth and of reason in these manifestations, than in the proud and stupid calm of a sceptic; and nothing, in our eyes, is more extravagant than indifference, just as in morals there is nothing worse than egotism.

A crowd of heresies, distinguished and defined by their authors, are, if we look to the root of their opinions, only one and the same heresy. The difference of form, and of certain outward circumstances, misleads the very authors of these heresies as to their kinship, or, to express ourselves more correctly, their identity. With a less prejudiced eye they would discern that, at a distance of several centuries, it is but the same claim which makes itself heard, the same idea which, whether true or false, returns to the charge, and insists upon its cause being finally settled. If force undertakes anew to

put an end summarily to the difficulty or discussion, it is a reason for the reappearance of the ill-used opinion, on some future day, to demand from reason an impartial examination of its merits. When reason shall have exposed and rendered tangible the hitherto unperceived side on which this opinion, so often reproduced, errs, the heresy will have lost the prestige which made its strength, and the idea which had so repeatedly troubled the world will go and die away in general contempt.

Heresy does not now-a-days insult, does not deny; or if it denies, does so in affirming. It honours religion; it only desires to perfect, or rather to bring back the latter to its pristine purity. It is a respectful incredulity. Let not this homage deceive you. Do not be simple enough to feel reassured. Be indulgent to intentions which are always, indeed, to be presumed good, and which are often far more so than we suppose; not indulgent to the error itself; and look to its acts, not its demonstrations. Above all, do not let yourselves be too much impressed with what, at the first glance, seems true in each of those errors which tend to diminish the plenitude of Christ, the plenitude of his grace or of his wisdom. If, for the sake of the true side of an error, you accept that error, you may equally accept all errors; for they all have some truth, nay, they may even be said to be only truths out of place. Do not, then, be content merely to see whether there be any truth in the opinion pro-

posed to you ; necessarily there is some, and always will be ; but the question is, to discover whether some other truth, which ought to have served as complement or counterpoise to the one you are struck with, has not been suppressed. Ask your adversary how, in the system he propounds, he disposes of that truth ; insist upon his finding it a place, and see both of you what, as regards the mystery of Jesus Christ, is the result of the restitution of this lost truth. Hold fast this legitimate, this incontestable principle, and you will see many phantoms vanish away.

How the human mind stunts itself in sophistry, but above all, in religious sophistry ! There are no smaller intellects than those which treat great subjects with small thoughts ; instead of growing they dwindle ; and under this head we may affirm, that if there be no knowledge so calculated as that of religion to elevate and enlarge thought, on the other hand, no other scientific sphere presents us with such striking and complete examples of silliness and puerility amongst its votaries. This is, and must be so. Truth, when we have narrowed it, revenges itself in narrowing us.

In all times, the arguments of incredulity have been more readily disposed of than the subtleties of heresy ; and it has always been easier to defend the truths of the Christian religion, taken in the mass, than each one of its constituent truths separately. Heresy has a more specious language, a more de-

cided prestige, than incredulity, and foremost among its claims is the not being incredulity.

III. PROTESTANTISM AND CATHOLICISM.

1. *Catholicism (its Characteristics), and Jesuitism.*

If we go to the root of the matter, we shall find that *authority*, so often said to be the very essence of Catholicism, is only its means. Its actual end, its spirit, is the triumph of form over substance, of the work of the hands over that of the heart, of matter over spirit, of the image over the reality. It aims at perpetuating what, at the price of his own blood, Christ came to abrogate,—the temporary reign of rites and symbols.

It is not because St. Peter came to Rome that Rome is the centre of the universe; it is because Rome had long been the centre of the universe that St. Peter had to be brought thither. If there had been no Rome, there would have been no Papacy; this pedestal was needed by that idol.

Catholicism is not a system, but a historical and moral fact. It derives its force from facts, and it could show no more decided symptom of decadence than a readiness to deduce itself from a metaphysical system. The real heads of Catholicity have ever had an instinctive perception of this truth. They have not allowed themselves to be taken off their guard, either by the lustre of talent or the light of analogy; and it is not by them, or under

their auspices, that the Church will ever be replunged into metaphysical abstractions. An edifice founded on centuries and on human nature has nothing to gain by transposing itself to a philosophical basis.

Catholicism has for author man himself, or rather human nature, which, not being able to dry up the stream, has tried to divert it, and has more or less succeeded in so doing. A delicate blending of authority and condescension—the authority always manifest, the condescension only vaguely felt—skillfully manages the masses, and even, which might seem less easy, choice spirits as well. Sublime or vulgar at will, Catholicism makes itself “all things to all men” in a manner which would probably have astonished St. Paul, though he had adopted these words for his own motto. In the inferior sense of the word, Catholicism is more human than the gospel. A number of men of the world, for whom the teachings of this religion are fables and its practices absurdities, wish it well nevertheless ; take up, on occasion, its defence against heresy, and accept it as a barrier against the invasion of some other religion, which would at length oblige them, whether affirmatively or negatively, to treat God with some earnestness.

It is impossible to refuse one's admiration to the sequence and connexion of ideas in Catholicism, and nothing can better confirm what we have said of the spontaneous character of this work, and of the

nature of its development. Never could anything at once so vast and so closely connected have been premeditated ; all works perfect in these points are involuntary. From one end to the other of the system, no joins, no knots—these are only found at the extremities. In particular, the internal dogmas or the theology of Catholicism is intimately related to the great external dogma,—I mean the doctrine of the Church. Whether the former were conceived for love of this doctrine, or whether the doctrine owes its birth to them (and these two conclusions do not exclude each other), it is certain that we cannot conceive them without it or it without them. The Church of authority must believe in the *opus operatum* ; the Church, wherein triumphs the *opus operatum*, must be a Church of authority. I understand by the *opus operatum*, the intrinsic virtue of the act or fact ; the positive separation between the subjective and the objective ; the substitution of *doing* for *being*, and, consequently, the principle of arbitrariness in morality and in religion. If this doctrine does not necessarily imply that of the merit of works, it at least connives at it and prepares its way, seeing that the idea of merit is more easily attached to that of *doing* than that of *being* ; since one can say to a moral creature, *Do*, because you *are* ; whereas one cannot in an absolute sense say to him, *Be*. In any case, these two dogmas, so evidently cognate, are two characteristic features of Catholic theology, and this fact avails to support, even if it do not amount to prove, what we

have elsewhere said, that Catholicism is a grand transaction entered into with the natural man ; for to what does the natural man cling with all his might, but, in the first place, to substituting *doing* for *being*, or works for faith, and, in the next, merit to grace, —a man himself for God ? What the gospel has come to snatch away, Catholicism aims at restoring. Hence the sacrifice, hence the priest, the hierarchy ; the Church, the whole system : others may reverse the terms, but the relation always subsists.

Strange antithesis, of which, nevertheless, one may see the terms rejoin and blend in the parent idea of Catholicism. The Catholic faith, which effaces as much as lies in its power the *consummatum est*, in which everything has constantly to begin over again, is at the same time the theology of the *opus operatum*, or the accomplished fact. To begin once and continue for ever is the idea of the gospel ; but it is not that of the natural man, and as we have said, Catholicism is, in several respects, the Christianity of the natural man.

To die, is the first and last word of the Christian philosophy of Rancé ; and I am far from being surprised at it. What does surprise me, and what I cannot sufficiently admire, is that this word should not have been the first and last of the apostolic teaching. All religions and all philosophies had only attained to cursing matter or to divinizing it. In the midst of an appalling and universal corruption of manners, an excessive asceticism appeared to be en-

joined on the new religion. Not choosing to seek its means of success in extreme license (polytheism left it nothing to do in that direction), it might have been expected to seek them in extreme severity. It did neither the one nor the other. It dared by the same stroke, by the same word, at once to subdue and to rehabilitate the flesh. Let others confine themselves to admiring the force of Christianity; it is its moderation which seems to me miraculous, which reveals to me its strength, and attests for me its divinity. This point of view has been but little dwelt upon by Christian apologists. It well deserves attention, however, and it is high time that it should obtain it.

Everything in error as in truth is connected by mysterious bonds. There is in Catholicism, as well as in Christianity, nothing idle, fortuitous, and of purely individual origin. The most various and discrepant elements therein are branches of the same trunk. This tendency to make the flesh responsible for everything, is an error with which Catholicism could hardly dispense. This malediction of matter is not unconnected with the materialism that infects it. It is nothing else than one of the applications of the principle, in virtue of which this Church aims before all at rendering itself visible, at replacing by sensual rules that worship in spirit and truth that Jesus Christ had inaugurated, and at perpetuating symbolism in the presence of reality. For just as the body is the symbol of the spirit, so asceticism is the symbol of piety.

It is one of the forces of Catholicism to have translated all its ideas into institutions ; each drop of water has become crystallized ; the Catholic religion has taken up its position at all points of human life, as has the naval power of England at the entrance of all seas ; each important moment or circumstance of a Catholic life has its rite ; the holy banner floats everywhere ; the religion is tangible, sensible ; it has a body, a form, a colour. Protestantism has for its body bare temples, simple services, cold for cold souls, the roof of the presbytery, and some internal recollections.

The religion of the Catholic oscillates ceaselessly between a subtle sensuality and an excessive asceticism.

If anything can revive Catholicism, it must, with the permission of M. de La Mennais, be works, not writings ; it is religion that must save the Church ; but when religion shall have accomplished that task over which metaphysicians lose their labour, then, oh, surprise ! for the Catholicism bequeathed by history will be slowly substituted a spiritual Catholicism of which the walls shall have been raised by Rome and Geneva combined.

I can conceive, because I feel, that one and the same heart may be able to blend a hatred of the Catholic system with the most cordial sympathy for those Christians, whether theologians or simple believers, that this communion claims.

Catholicism reposes on Pyrrhonism, since it is but the despair of reason.

The present epoch cannot be one of slumber for Catholicism ; it must either arouse itself, or die ; and to arouse Catholicism is to arouse the priest.

Jesuitism, which people obstinately persist in distinguishing from and even opposing to Catholicism, is nothing but Catholicism concentrated, just as Catholicism is in the language of chemistry only Jesuitism *diffused*. Jesuitism merely reproduces in reduced proportions, and consequently more distinctly, the ancient and instinctive policy of Rome. This policy is nowhere written out ; were it written out it would be impossible ; it is not even spoken, it is hardly avowed between adepts, and if one may so say, there is a degree of honesty in this self-deceit. Be that as it may, Catholicism resembles those wrestlers of the ancient arena, whose limbs, rubbed with oil, slipped out of the adversary's grasp. Catholicism is always ready to disavow what it tolerates, to tolerate what it has disavowed ; the diversity of dishes with which it permits—closing its eyes the while—its splendid table to be covered, flatters the most varied tastes, and attracts numberless guests ; but if you watch the feast closely, the unwholesome viands disappear ; and it is even denied, with a certain kind of sincerity, that they were ever included in the bill of fare. Those who wish for more wholesome provisions and for frugal diet, may, if they like, reduce themselves to it ; and he whose blunted taste requires other condiments, need only look for them at the further end of the table, where they have been placed no one knows

when or how, or by whom. Truth is received, but falsehood is not excluded; and there is room in this Church for all doctrines, as in the old Roman Pantheon there was room for all gods. No error is formally excluded; and as for truths, a marvellous tact has either eliminated or weakened those that directly threatened the dogma of authority. Attachment to this fundamental dogma, and an attentive and deliberate condescension to the inclinations of the natural man, these two explain everything in the Romish system, and might be said to sum it up. At all events, there are no peculiar doctrines of Roman theology which do not strike the observer by coincidence—which cannot possibly be accidental—with these two principles. Jesuitism, then, is but an aggravation of Catholicism.

Jesuitism, or what is commonly designated as such, was far from being confined to the disciples of Loyola. They cannot even claim to have initiated it; it is natural that they should have passed for its parents, but in point of fact they were but the sponsors of a very old child; they no more invented Jesuitism than the Greek sophists invented sophistry; and, just as all Escobar-like subterfuges are not Jesuitic, so every Jesuit is not an Escobar.

Pascal has omitted to observe that the Jesuits are but the sponsors, and not the true fathers of the system which bears their name; that what has been justly or unjustly called *Jesuitism* dates from the beginning of the world; that the art of interpreta-

tion, of the direction of intention, of mental reserves, has been practised in all times by the most ignorant of mortals ; and that if the name of *Jesuit* had the meaning that the Jansenists would willingly have assigned to it, and that it has, indeed, customarily received, we should have to say that the human heart is jesuitical by nature. What is *probabilism*, if not the uncommon name of the most common thing in the world : the worship of opinion, the preference given to authority over individual conviction ; to persons over ideas ; to chance coincidences over the oracles of conscience ? The spirit of the age, public opinion, progress of ideas, what are all these but *probabilism* still, under modern and popular names ? *Probabilism* had no name when Satan accosted our first parents ; but what was Satan in their eyes but a *grave doctor*, very capable after all of *rendering his opinions probable* ? All this does not excuse Escobar, Molina, nor the Father Bauny, if they have, in point of fact, composed a whole moral system out of the infinitely various suggestions of the Evil One ; only the honour or the shame of the original invention in no way belongs to them.

We say, then, without attaching to the name any peculiar odium of crime or witchcraft, that Catholicism and Jesuitism are one, and that their blending point is the dogma of authority, of which Jesuitism is but a more compact edition, a reformation analogous to those which recalled the monastic orders, from time to time, to the strict observance of their

rule. From the point of view of sympathy, it is a restoration ; from that of antipathy, a relapse.

Every idea, circumstances aiding, must one day arrive at its complete expression, and personify itself in a body or in an individual ; and then it has the appearance of transcending itself, whereas it is simply standing upright instead of being seated as before. Thus it was in the sixteenth century with the Roman idea ; the company of Ignatius prolonged to their end all the lines already begun ; in theology and morals they spoke their Church's last word ; or rather, they revealed to her her thought ; or rather again, they revealed to her the inevitable consequences of her principles. The Church was much moved by this ; its most illustrious doctors protested and disavowed ; Catholicism would neither be Jesuit nor Ultramontane : it is, nevertheless, both in germ ; and I know not how—without denying or destroying itself—it can get rid of these impure and dangerous excrescences.

The Roman Church may suppress the order, but it will be in vain ; it is immortal ; to Jesuits, Jesuits will still succeed.

2. *Protestantism ; Character of the Reformation ; Reformation and Renaissance ; Deviation of the Protestant Principle ; its Future.*

The Reformation was in its principle neither literary nor philosophical, it was moral. Addressing

itself in man to the principle of action, the Reformation was an action. It only occupied itself with ideas in their relation to life.

We must teach the reformed themselves to appreciate the Reformation. It was religious, in the most exalted and complete sense of the word ; religious, not only through its dogmatic opposition to the religion of the day, but by its opposition to unbelief, each day more proud and more audacious.

However great the stress we lay, and are entitled to lay, upon the part played by the moral sentiment in bringing about the Reformation, this sentiment would have continued to slumber much longer, but for the awakening of intelligence. True, virtue does not originate in reasoning nor in taste ; but a whole age sunk in moral error cannot rise out of it without a little help on the part of intelligence. A sentiment that cannot become an idea must long remain confused and inert ; there is thought in virtue, or rather, there is no virtue without thought ; thought is the instrument of ethics, just as the senses themselves are the instrument of thought ; and we can no more be virtuous without the co-operation of reason, than we can reason without the co-operation of the brain.

The literary reformation moulded itself upon ancient models ; the religious *Renaissance* did nothing but oppose one authority to another—to antiquity an antiquity more remote still ; to the commentary the text ; to the Church, the Scriptures. The two move-

ments, the religious and the literary, were not in opposite directions. Free inquiry, in the absolute acceptation of the phrase, was claimed but by a small number of men in philosophy, and in literature by no one. The sixteenth century could produce Montaigne and Charron; it could not have supported Descartes. That Descartes should have been contained in Luther; that the whole of human thought was one day to make its way in by that breach; that one single authority denied was to lead to the disputing of all authorities, is another matter; it is certain for all that that the Reformation was the search after an *authority* higher than that which ruled the faith of nations, and that in this, its course and that of literary *renaissance* were exactly parallel. One may even argue that the Reformation, in denying the Church of Rome, was disposed to create another in which an equally implicit faith was to be placed; but if men are inconsistent, humanity is not so, and logic, that necessity of the mind, goes on its way imperturbably.

The Reformation, as such, had a negative side by which it bordered on, and might have appeared connected with, the scepticism of the sixteenth century. There was indeed a moment of confusion between the two, and it is well known that at the court of Francis I., licentiousness for a while wore the colours of the Reformation. Liberty, loved by these as an end, and by those as means, but still loved by both, associated the two parties as long as any illusion was

possible, but there is so much difference between those who accept liberty as an end, and those who only seek in it a means to an end—or, if you will, between those who want it for themselves and those who want it for God—that the illusion cannot be of long duration; and those who desired liberty in the one respect soon declared themselves, and very effectually too, the adversaries of those who desired it in the other.

In rehabilitating morality in religion, the Reformers replaced Christianity within the reach and uses of life.

The reaction of morality against ritualism is the true fact of the Reformation, its glory, the title that belongs to it.

In the sixteenth century the reaction against Catholicism takes two forms: the one irreligious, which at once leaps to atheism; the other religious, which is the Reformation; this last being equally opposed both to Catholicism and to unbelief. Without the latter of these reactions, what would have become of Christianity, and, *consequently, what would have become of Catholicism itself?* It is not less accurate than startling to say that Catholicism has to thank the sixteenth century for the seventeenth, and owes Bossuet to Luther. In saving the trunk, the Reformation has saved the branch; but henceforth it belongs to the branch to save itself.

The Reformation might only have been negative, but made itself positive; might have only been liberty, but became religion. Or rather, this was its

first aim, its final character; and its glory lay in resisting all temptations that attracted it out of its course. There were in the sixteenth century two kinds of reformers: those who, while more or less sparing the form, namely, Catholicism, silently gnawed away at the substance, which is Christianity; and those who were resolved to save the substance at the expense of the form, under which, deprived of light and air, it was gradually rotting away. There is not less war, nay, there is far more war, between these two classes of reformers, than between the Reformers, properly so called, and the hierarchy. In a word, the Reformation has been the saving of Christianity; without it, not only would Catholicism have failed to purify itself, but have known no arrest in its degeneration; not only is it to the Reformation that the seventeenth century owes Bossuet, Fénelon, Pascal, as it owed to it Abbadie and Saurin; but I say further, that but for it Catholicism would no longer exist, because all the branches whatever would have had to perish with the trunk. Rome pretends that there would no longer be Christians if there were no longer Catholics; and we maintain that but for the Reformation there would no longer be Catholics, because there would be no longer Christians.

There are who have wished to trace in the development of Montaigne's scepticism the consequences of Luther's Reformation; who, when they see Protestantism as well as the Roman Church bending beneath the weight of the eighteenth cen-

tury, affirm that the woes of the one Church came from the other. These have not known how to distinguish between the massive but frangible oak, and the plant that bends and breaks not ; they have tried to render a religion responsible for the excesses of irreligion ; because the liberty claimed by the former subserved the designs of the latter, they have not understood that if there be no liberty that is not liable to abuse, there is no religion either without liberty ; and that to suppress liberty, in detestation of the impiety that makes use of it, is to be content to perish, so only that an enemy should perish with us ; they have not seen that Protestantism and Catholicism suffered (but not both equally deeply) from the attacks of a common enemy, and that the effervescence of the theology of free inquiry was much less alarming and fatal than the slow consumption in which Catholicism declines. At the sight of those Protestant theologians who confine themselves to the first rudiments, as St. Paul says—who three centuries after Luther are still sticking at free inquiry, mistaking one of the conditions of life for life itself ; and for ever setting out but never arriving—a cry has been raised, “ See the Reformation ! ” But this is to take the *medium* in which an object lives for that object itself, and the atmosphere for the globe that it surrounds. Let us return to facts. According to the view taken, the Reformation may either be a principle of liberty or a homage to conscience ; the Reformation, in the abstract, is for some,

room for a religion, for others it *is* a religion ; but in truth, it was at its birth better than a reformation : it was a restoration. It is so still, it ever will be, by the very circumstance that it has restored to the individual all his responsibility, and that, removing him from the convenient régime of the faith of authority, it imposes on him the severest of laws,—*the perfect law of liberty* of which St. James speaks. Do not be deceived ; those who hate it most, hate it because of this, not as being liberty (in the natural sense of the word), but as being religion ; it suits the purposes of their enmity that it should have been born under the auspices and have come into question under the associations of liberty : they impute to it, and will to the end, that is, to their end, all the evils of liberty, or rather of those who separate liberty from obedience, the means from the end. But believe me, it is on better grounds that they hate it ; and the severity, the depth of its dogmatism, its exclusively earnest character, its inflexible logic, are no less a grievance in the eyes of Catholicism than the boundless career which it has seemed to open out to liberty of thought.

Towards the sixteenth century, dogma and morality, which in religion form a whole—since religion is but the fusion of these two elements—found themselves deplorably severed : one went this way, the other that. To believe and to live were become two distinct and independent things. Thus separated, dogma was nothing but a cipher without a key ;

morality but a law without any veritable sanction. Accordingly, there were two courses to choose between : either to re-establish the lost unity, or to complete the severance. The Reformers fixed upon the first course ; certain bold thinkers chose the last. These began by making a solemn exception in favour of the old religion, which they wished to have within reach in the hour of need ; and to which besides they were bound by habit—like people who, when they intend to scour the country, begin by locking up the house securely, and that they may be able to re-enter it in case of storm or danger, carry off the key in their pocket. They began to philosophize and moralize as freely as though the religion they professed had laid down nothing positive relating to the object of their researches. Always good Catholics, they were none the less, in their writings, Deists, Materialists, Atheists somewhat, and all this without any connexion or consistency ; there were in the same individual two beings, who alternately gave place one to the other, and who took care never to run counter,—the man of habit and calculation, who was Catholic, and the man of thought, who was anything else. One even saw some alternately speak and write in two contrary directions ; the soutane of the ecclesiastic now and then covered a philosopher, who demolished in secular attire what the former had laid down in his black coat ; and this without any scruple, any sense of contradiction between the two characters.

The sixteenth century had bequeathed a fatal prejudice to the seventeenth. It had not explicitly denied either religion or politics or morality, but it had ignored their unity. Instead of forming in its eyes three concentric circles revolving with one movement on the same axis, these were three neighbouring spheres which mutually impinged upon and embarrassed each other. Politics, religion, morality, had each their own principles and a separate domain. Morality did not depend upon religion; an entirely ritualistic religion only claimed, as it were, a symbolical obedience; and neither religion nor morality penetrated into the sphere of government. It was one of the glories of the Reformation (how comes it that this has been so rarely pointed out?) to reconstitute, at least in principle, this ignored unity.

The Reformation, as principle, is permanent in the Church like Christianity. It is the fundamental ideas of Christianity, considered at once as individual religion and as establishment, which are constantly re-demanding their place. In a word, it is Christianity restoring itself, spontaneously and by its own energies, so that, even at the present day, whatever the importance of the event of the sixteenth century, reformation is still a thing to be done, a thing which will repeat itself perpetually, and to which Luther and Calvin did nothing but prepare a smoother road and wider door. They did not once for all reform the Church, but they consolidated the principle, and laid down the conditions of all future reforms.

Without wishing to exaggerate, we may say that the Reformation was essentially what we now call a *revival*; it was a conversion on a great scale. The early discussions on authority did not deprive it of this character which Luther forcibly maintained because it was his own. But what is curious to observe, is that when under the auspices of the civil and spiritual powers, public discussions on authority were held, the principle of authority was by that very circumstance abandoned, all the arguments that were employed against it were not worth one practical concession of such importance; authority denies itself when it discusses.

The whole universe is persuaded that the Reformation consisted just in removing from the world the idea of infallibility, and in remitting to each the care of his own religion.

The imperfection of the reforming work of the sixteenth century, depends upon the doctrine of the Church not having been thoroughly gone into, or the ecclesiastical question definitely settled, when all other questions were so. This is the very point that the reformers, who could not do or see everything, have left to our care. No doubt a Church, where much is said about the Church, is not *for that reason* more vigorous or more healthy; but a Church which does not realize the idea of Church, or care about realizing it, which does not even feel the need to do so, is not the most desirable Church either.

Man did not separate for the sake of separating;

separation was but a *medicine* that many have mistaken for *food*; a singular practice, we must confess.

The Church of the Christian individual has re-appeared with Protestantism, and the most admirable result of the Reformation, the noblest name that can be given to it, is in my opinion this: religious individuality reformed, the Bible replaced in the hands of each, and these words addressed to every man, "Thy Master is in heaven!"

If the Protestant Church has not the courage to accept the principle which has given it birth; if after having denied all visible authority it puts itself as to spiritual matters under the yoke of a visible authority, then it is false to its origin, and becomes once more, as far as its principle admits, *Catholic*, but with an equivocal and bastard Catholicism which has the submission, but not the faith, of Catholicism properly so called. Protestantism was thrown at its birth into a direction not its own. . . . But its principle is stronger than itself. Never will Protestantism forget that it is the proclamation of the right, or rather the duty of each individual to hold direct communication with God and his Word. And moreover, the spiritual authorities that Protestantism successively bestows on itself are so devoid of authority, their titles are so positively defective, it is so impossible that the obedience they obtain should ever be an obedience of faith, so impossible that that obedience should ever become fixed and permanent, that the vital principle of Protestantism can never perish, and must constantly re-appear.

Nevertheless, Protestantism will never have a form consistent with its principles—a true form—until it realizes the idea of association. And this idea can only be realized under the auspices of liberty, that is to say, in so far as individualities which do not harmonize shall not be forcibly united, and that those which do harmonize shall be able to unite.

3. *Difference between Catholics and Protestants ; Tradition, Authority, and Liberty ; Priest and Minister ; Confession ; Worship of the Virgin ; Internal Christianity ; Necessity of completing each of the two Tendencies by the other.*

Catholicism, not in so far as it is Christian, but Catholic, is the Church of common sense ; it is by common sense that it triumphs. Protestantism, which seems, but only seems to do this, has more ideal bases ; and is placed in the sublime but perilous position, either of perishing if it will not remount, as Protestantism, higher than common sense ; or of casting anchor within the veil if it does not wish to perish.

Every religious truth is at the same time a philosophical and even a literary truth ; every truth is in accordance with all truths ; he who believes in Protestantism must believe that it has added something to the treasures of the human mind, and that it has restored some truth even in the domain of art. All the rest,—I mean the number and lustre of master-

pieces, the more or less breadth of the road, more or less freedom of the movement,—are subordinate questions. Protestantism may have had to suffer from the conditions of its peculiar function, which is to protest; allowance must be made for this; upon how many points does not the position of Catholicism limit its progress in the literature that belongs to it? But it is nevertheless true that the appreciation of Protestant literature necessarily forms part of Protestant apologetics.

God forbid that we should make no difference between epochs, positions, characters, intellects, education! But it would be really dangerous to affirm that neither Bossuet nor Calvin was able to find in the gospel what we all find there at present,—the principle of religious individuality and liberty of conscience. Let us be equitable to men, but not unjust to truth.

It has been attempted to make of the Reformers of the sixteenth century champions of liberty of conscience. Never would they have stirred the masses with this abstract dogma; never either would this abstract dogma have inspired the men themselves to do all that they did. A more intimate and personal interest, if one may so say, set in movement the Europe of the sixteenth century. The first step was not to claim religious liberty, but to make use of it.

Free inquiry found itself at that epoch implicated in a work of which it was not the object; the object of that work, as M. Mignet points out, was the idea

of salvation by faith ; that is to say, of the restoration of man solely by the adhesion of his heart to the merciful overtures of God.

The Church of free inquiry can be nothing but a society of consciences ; she must either abjure her principle or consent to liberty. Her head is either in heaven or at Rome.

Protestantism, to take the word in its proper sense, is not a religion ; we do not possess one religion simply because we have abjured another ; alongside of the negative principle which has separated us from the Roman Church there is a positive principle which re-unites us to each other ; this positive principle is no other than a common belief ; it is in virtue of this principle that we form Churches, seeing that a Church which should believe in nothing would be an absurd and contradictory thing. Around what do we assemble, if it be not around a belief or an idea in common ?

Protestantism, the restoration of the gospel, has caused the reign of the Holy Spirit to succeed to that of the Church. This is its vital and distinctive principle. Some one has called this rationalism ; why did he not say mysticism ? But it is neither the one nor the other ; it is Christian spiritualism.

Protestantism, as a religion, might be false ; as a principle, it is true ; as such, it differs in nothing from the principle of philosophy : like it, it will have reasons for belief.

Protestantism is for me only a starting-point ;

my *religion* is beyond. I might, as a Protestant, have Catholic opinions,—and who knows if I have not? What I absolutely reject is authority.

Protestantism is for some a party, for others a religion; this is because it is at once Pagan and Christian; because it is only, properly speaking, a space preserved for liberty of conscience, where faith and scepticism may equally take shelter. But in tender consciences a great liberty involves a great responsibility; the sentiment of this responsibility creates in them a more spontaneous, more individual, more intense religious life than is found in any other system. Liberty is the land of earnest, strong, and logical belief. There, Christianity is every one's affair; there, I allow, the attractions of forms and the prestige of authority do not miraculously cease; but there man is constantly warned of the insufficiency of authority and of forms; they refuse him the shelter he asks from them, and, if we may so speak, they incessantly throw him back upon his conscience and upon the gospel. By the side of the most languid and insipid rationalism you find all that positive faith possesses of savour, and the most active zeal. The Catholic, if he likes, may give it in charge to his Church to believe for him; the Protestant, subject to the same temptation, is continually recalled to the use of his own liberty by the use he sees made of liberty in his own communion. A thousand questions propose themselves; he can neither ignore them nor remit their solution to an

authority which does not exist, or that none is bound to recognise. Liberty is therefore for him less a right than a duty. Admirable reversal this of vulgar ideas ; an idea that incessantly arouses consciences, combats the inertia of the flesh, permits not, in the Protestant Church, a long torpor or an irremediable decadence, and in our day especially, produces within it effects which begin to be sensibly felt even without.

When once the principle of Protestantism has been distorted to the point of seeing in the representatives of social interests common to all, the representatives of spiritual interests common only to a few, no consequences should surprise us. In such an order of things, it is not death, it is life we should wonder at.

Evangelical doctrine has denied the principle of the Roman Church ; and as to the age, it has in one sense accorded everything to it, and in another has refused everything ; has accorded all to human nature, refused all to sin.

Protestantism is not religion, but the starting-point of religion ; it is the principle of liberty and individuality applied to religious things ; it is consequently not from Protestantism that we must demand unity ; this would almost be a contradiction in terms ; unity is in the kingdom of Jesus Christ and in the Spirit ; unity is in Christianity.

Not only is Protestantism a homage rendered to the principle of religious liberty, but Protestantism is *nothing else*. Christianity is another thing, Pro-

testantism is *only this*. If we call ourselves Protestants while refusing liberty of conscience, *we lie* to our brethren.

The characteristic principle of Protestantism is quite irrespective of dogma ; this principle is nothing else than the absolute independence of conscience. The Reformers, who consummated their schism in virtue of this idea, did not follow it out to its end. They placed their Church under the protection of different princes who had adopted their principles ; and the harmony which existed during the times of the first zeal between the State and the Churches did not allow them to see the inconvenience of the system. Later, when the spirit of liberty consecrated by the Reformation had acted within these Churches, the Reformers were constrained to see that something remained to be added to the system of their ancestors ; but that which might have been easily done at the time of the great movement that broke the unity of the Church, that which would only have appeared the spontaneous consequence of the principles then adopted, meets at present with very great difficulties, and can only be obtained at the cost of long continued effort.

To be a Protestant is to protest unceasingly against all constraint in matters of religion ; to call ourselves by the name, and yet to tyrannize over men's consciences, is the most glaring of all contradictions.

Protestantism in politics, religion, literature, is a right to isolate ourselves from the community

of belief, in order to see whether we shall be able to re-attach ourselves to it again, and up to what point we can do so. It is that right to separate one's intellectual fortune from aggregate funds, and from public creeds, in order to count it over, and then, with fuller knowledge of the cause in hand, to return to the association. Protestantism is individualism in thought. Protestantism is a form of liberty.

Protestantism, after having been coveted as liberty, soon begins to alarm as religion; and this is the most favourable and encouraging thing that can be said respecting it.

Is the actual form of Christianity, its expression and manifestation in the midst of an earnest and living Protestantism, identical with Christianity? Is it as vast and profound, as strong and as free, as divine and as human, as the latter? Who could think so? At what distance, then, is the form from its ideal? If this question were solvable, so would be the other. We may be conscious of defects and excesses without having learned of God to remedy either the one or the other. I should, however, marvel if any one who had studied both individual man and society (society too much looked at by some, and too little by others) could persuade himself that the actual *form* of Christianity, even where most active, most living, most *awake*, could be fixed and stationary. It must still, as Bossuet used to say, *dilate* a great deal *towards heaven*, in order to correspond with the immensity of our wants and

the immensity of our future. In all epochs in which it thus dilates, you observe that, for a short season, at all events, and in a certain sense, it becomes popular. It is popular in another and degraded sense at times of languor and death.

An attentive examination of documents would prove to a historian, if unabsorbed by political theories, that it is from the depths of the soul, out of the purely *human* elements of our nature, and not its *social*, that the powerful impulse of the Reformation sprang. The Reformation subsequently became Protestantism ; but it was originally simply *reformation* ; human passions have classed a mystical fact, if I may so call it, in the order of political facts ; the Reformers have been made anti-Catholics in spite of themselves ; *Protestant* is become synonymous with *anti-Catholic* ; but I insist that, in the beginning, the cause was spiritual, and free from party spirit ; even now the true reformer is not anti-Catholic ; nor, I believe, the true Catholic anti-Protestant ; they are both of Christ if they love Christ, and put their trust in him ; and the superficial divisions that man has traced on the surface are lost in a profound unity the further we penetrate into the interior of Christian souls.

Many Protestants affect to speak of the weakness of Catholicism, and already ring its dirge. But if it be not strong of its own strength, it may be that it is strong through our weakness, which is also a way of being strong. As for ourselves, we depend con-

fidently on the force, not of Protestantism, but of the Protestant principle; it will end by finding its form.

Protestantism cannot defend itself against Catholicism with the Catholic, but the Protestant principle. Protestantism, as such, can only be strong on the condition of being Protestant, and in proportion as it is so.

We are not fond of saying that Protestantism has succeeded to Catholicism. We would not have the fifteen centuries that preceded the Reformation proclaimed, in its name, null and void. What existed during those fifteen centuries, and was not interrupted by the Reformation, was the Christian Church, which belongs to us, and to which we belong, in so far as we are Christians.

Tradition is the treasure of religious thought, amassed by ages, upon the platform of positive revelation. This treasure is not a revelation, but a free and spontaneous development, to which, in a certain measure, and under certain reservations, the divine sanction has not been wanting. All Christian literature is the body, the deposit of this tradition. But we must either repudiate all tradition, which is perfectly impossible, or go back, link by link, to the point where this tradition commences. It is unjust and imprudent to stop at our reformers, and to ignore all that may have preceded them, and all that has since been thought out under another inspiration than theirs. We can neither improvise,

by a back stroke, the whole human development of divine truth, nor take for the whole of tradition the thinking of certain men. We are the more convinced of this, that the thinking of our school does little more than represent one of the forms of religious thought. It is strong in dialectics and weak in speculation. Speculative thought, on the contrary, abounds in the Fathers, and in the writings of the Middle Ages; and it would be vain to say that speculation is dangerous. Are not dialectics equally, perhaps more so? Now, religious thought has only these two forms; and in religion, we must give to thought that place that religion itself has assigned to it. Dialectics will never be interdicted without leading to the abuse of speculation, nor speculation without the abuse of dialectics.

We revere the tradition of thought; we only reject that of error.

Christianity is also tradition because it is spirit. Christianity is not only a doctrine or a fact once accomplished; it is a perpetual fact, a life of humanity, a free and living force, a virtue; and we too, from this point of view, have our tradition, which does not merely manifest itself by the constant reproduction of the same formulas, and the constant return to the repository of truth, but by the similarity of inspiration in the diversity of ages, places, and men. It dates further back than Calvin, and it embraces a horizon more vast than that of the Reformation, and of all the attempts at reforma-

tion which preceded that of the sixteenth century. Jerome, Augustine, Bernard, the Abbé of Saint Cyran, form part of our tradition.

Who is not, up to a certain point, a slave of tradition? It is not always necessary that centuries and generations should co-operate; one single man suffices; the authority of one is the tradition of many;—a quantum of idleness and servility finding means of agreement with a quantum of insolence;—and the attraction, the empire of tradition, is so great, that the religion which has broken at one blow with tradition and philosophy (I have said with what philosophy) is, by that very fact, an heroic religion; the most energetic appeal to whatever the human mind can possess of power and self-respect; the most appalling task that has ever been imposed on pride and indolence; but, at the same time, the most honourable perspective that has ever been opened out to the dignity of our nature. That which is proposed to our hopes, is the advantage and the rare glory of being able to say, in all truth: “I know in whom I have believed.”

St. Paul did not despise tradition, by which we are to understand the communication of a fact or a truth, on the part of a person who has the right to be believed. Philosophy teaches us what entitles a person to our belief; but the conditions she imposes being fulfilled, it is philosophical to believe; and tradition comes to the satisfaction of philosophy, to fill up the void left by that very philosophy, which

can indeed reason upon facts, but could not have invented them. Revelation is in this sense tradition *par excellence*; it is the tradition of God himself. But the succession of holy lives in the history of humanity, is also a tradition of God, or a divine tradition; these lives are Christianity itself; for Christianity, although it flow from a doctrine and be written in a book, is nevertheless essentially neither a doctrine nor a book, but a life gushing eternally from the very heart of God. Now, this life perpetuated from believer to believer is again a revelation, a tradition, a divine testimony. There is also a divine tradition in the perfect similarity of Christianity, through the extremest differences of time and place; and the philosopher, struck himself with this marvellous agreement of ages, natures, and races, cannot avoid seeing in such an intimate and involuntary harmony between the savage and the civilized man—between the Christian of the first century and one of the nineteenth—a fact very worthy to weigh in the balance in favour of the Christian religion. In another sense, too, tradition is important, namely, when going back to the very source of our beliefs it discloses these to us in that state of purity and simplicity, which they have lost in the discourses and the writings of following ages. For although the diamond of truth be always equally pure in itself, and although so soon as it is freed from its incrustations it gives the same rays as ever, still these

have to be removed; while in the hands of the Master and of his immediate disciples, there is nothing to dull or tarnish it: it is all diamond.

It is neither against this tradition nor against this philosophy that St. Paul would have us on our guard. He speaks of a pretended philosophy and a human tradition. The first is natural reason proceeding without rule, and operating on incomplete or false data; the second is a stupid prejudice which adds to any opinion whatever the brutal weight of number or duration. St. Paul accordingly wishes to warn the Colossians and ourselves against sophistry erected into philosophy, and custom erected into proof.

Prodigious but inevitable fact! The tradition of the truth has sometimes conveyed the tradition of falsehood. Under cover of one important dogma brought into prominence, hoisted high and dominating the whole doctrine, a crowd of human inventions, calculated for the consolation of the natural man, have formed a close column and increased the current of tradition.

Catholicism and Protestantism are not so much two religions as two methods, between which there is not liberty of choice, for God himself has chosen for us; and it is to liberty, that is to Protestantism, that he has called us all. But what is well worthy of remark, is, that Catholicism, whose actual date of birth is lost, avows from the first its principle, and erects it into a dogma; whereas Protestantism only

attains to self-knowledge retrospectively, and becomes a method, somewhat late in the day, by reflection and the nature of things. It does not begin by proclaiming liberty and right of inquiry; in the bottom of its heart it does not disavow the principle of authority, or even that of unity; its first anxieties are all theological. The great point, in its sight, is to oppose faith to works, the grace of God to the merits of man; but it is carried away by its actions; it finds out its right after having exercised it: from being a religion it comes to be a method, from a theology a philosophy,—but this very slowly, and as it were, against the grain; it is Catholic in principle, and Protestant in its own despite. Still less than Catholicism has it known what it was about; it has still less the honour of its own works than Catholicism the responsibility of hers. Even at the present time it has not all the philosophy of its actions, all the consciousness of its principles. Looking upon it as a method, it is still to the great number of its partisans what it was at first,—an empiricism, a simple fact. In the masses it is liberal only in its own defence; but it is constrained to be so.

This does not, however, prevent it being of divine institution, taking it as a starting-point or a method in religion. But it is like a child torn by a violent operation from its mother's womb; and although born robust and capable of life, it still bears the marks of the forceps. It is enough that we reflect upon its name; it is born from a *protestation*; it

has for its first form opposition, reaction ; it is pre-occupied with an adversary and a combat ; it must needs be in a certain degree wanting in simplicity and impartiality ; it was born defiant, it will long remain so. The religion that it has founded must needs betray prejudice and resentment, as well as the immense gain of having gone back to the original source. It may be that it deprives itself of some advantages, in consequence of the evil found mingling with these ; that it separates itself when it would be well to remain united ; that it repudiates wholesale the heritage of centuries, disavows its spiritual ancestors, and makes over entirely to the Catholic Church—that is, to a sect—a more or less considerable part of the maternal fortune : I mean the men, the works, the thoughts, the living tradition of the Church universal.

It is the misfortune of Catholicism not to have left the chain fastened to its first ring, and to the rock in which that ring was inserted, so that being no longer thus upheld it drags along in dust and mud ; an irreparable misfortune this ; while that of Protestantism—merely a transient misfortune—is to make too light of the fifteen centuries which seem to separate it from its starting-point, and which would rejoin it to that point, like an electric and living chain.

But this is not its normal and final condition ; there is no permanent necessity why Protestantism should exclusively dogmatize and refuse itself the

riches of internal contemplation. It would grow dry and withered if it always protested; but it is not its principle—the principle of free inquiry—which does it injury,—far from it; on the contrary, only when it shall fully have realized this in its own experience, when it shall have become perfectly logical and at one with itself,—shall have thoroughly understood and discerned, both as a right and a duty, the dogma of religious individuality inaugurated by Jesus Christ—in a word, when it shall be frankly *Protestant*—will it no longer need to *protest*, will it forget to do so, will it become really Catholic. But even now, let us bless God for it, Protestantism is built upon the rock of ages, since it is founded upon the very will of God. The character, the blessing of the new covenant, is individuality, spontaneity, and liberty; the religious revolution which has reinstated these great truths in honour and circulation is a true restoration, a return to the gospel; and this is so true, that all Catholics who have any real religious life, avail themselves unconsciously, and by the very fact of their life, of these elements of Protestantism.

Inquiry (I do not say individual inquiry, which would be but a vicious pleonasm) is in principle at the beginning of every one's religion, at that of the creed of the Catholic himself. The Catholic must of necessity commence by being Protestant. Men all earnest belong to this elementary, abstract, and preliminary religion, up to the moment when the

road branches off into two ways, upon one of which the Catholic enters under the banner of the authority of the Church, while the Protestant (in the historical sense of the word) takes the other under the auspices of the authority of the Scriptures. Now if, to reach this point of divergence, science were necessary, it is evident that a very small number could—I will not say arrive, but even set out; that is to say, religion in general would only be the affair of the learned, and even of the eminently learned, if we consider the actual epoch. If, on the contrary, in order to arrive at that point of separation,—if up to that point where, being already *Christian*, the question is to choose between the two communions,—if to get up to that point, I say, science has not been found necessary,—if, without the help of history, of criticism, or of philosophy, it has been possible to rise to the conviction of the truth of Christianity, this can only have been effected by the heart, or by the Holy Spirit, or perhaps by these two means united.

Between the adherents of authority and those of liberty there is an abyss that the greatest spirituality on either side has found it difficult to fill up; mysticism has sometimes been able to do so; but in mysticism carried to a certain point there is no longer room for these distinctions, nor even for the idea of a Church. But where two men have an attachment of faith, the one to the principle of authority, the other to the principle of free inquiry,

each is rash and daring in the eyes of the other. Each, from the point of view of his antagonist, is placed on the platform of a supposition equally gratuitous and monstrous; these two principles are horrified at each other; and the oil of unction and sympathy that had begun to flow suddenly stops and freezes at the thought: on the part of the Catholic, of the Protestant being in the bonds of a damnable error; on that of the Protestant, of the Catholic having placed his personal religion and the Holy Spirit, so far as he is concerned, at the mercy of human authority. Christianity, the common medium in which these two minds move, and where they have met, ought to be stronger still, and to unite and fuse them in spite of all; and we do sometimes see this occur, but less often than we could wish.

What makes the manifestation of the unity of the spirit so difficult between a Catholic and a Reformed Christian, is, the priest in the first place, the priest in the next place, and the priest always.

The minister and the priest are not one and the same. The priest is a mediator, the minister an instrument. The minister is a man, the priest is more than a man; that is to say, he is not a man at all. The priest is grace personified, is a permanent miracle; the priest is God! This is either admirable or horrible. This must have immense consequences, good or bad. Good or bad,--Catholicism is pregnant with them all, for it is the religion of the priest, it is

priestcraft, neither less nor more. And priestcraft is in religious matters what the divine right is in politics.

Protestantism may be defined in two brief words,—it has abolished, or if you prefer it, it has multiplied the priest. There is but one priest, who is Christ, and we who believe in him are all priests. Christ is priest by the sacrifice that he has made for us: as God, of his glory,—as man, of his flesh; and we in our turn are priests by the sacrifice of our hearts. But in the intermediate sense understood by Catholicism, there is no longer any priest.

The Catholic institution of the priest has done all it could to relegate Christianity to the prison of Judaism. Christ, the reality of types and figures, had abolished these. Catholicism has restored them, has carried us back into the realm of shadows, has practically denied the worship in spirit and in truth,—evangelical liberty, religious personality. All this grew up by little and little; none of it dates from the earliest times; not a trace of these errors is to be found in the gospel. Catholicism has been built like our great cathedrals, by many generations, at long intervals, and according to the laws of a slow but certain logic. The sacrifice made the priest; with the priest came the hierarchy; with that, the celibacy of the priest; with the celibacy of the priest, all the remainder. And when once the religious person, removed from the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was found absorbed in the Church,—

individuality in universality,—when the soul had been, by the doctrine of the *opus operatum*, replaced under the laws of space and time, then—not from a cross, but from the summit of another Babel—might be heard fall the words, “It is finished.”

If we too wish that the priest may be taken away, it is that religion may be added to family life.

The absence of a spontaneous and personal religion makes the power, and creates the necessity for the priest.

Confidences to a third party are always perilous, rarely legitimate; obligatory confession is no less so; and it is not difficult to conceive that in several respects it is even more dangerous still. We believe it as incompatible with the conjugal state as with Christianity, and we rejoice to find not the slightest trace of this *rite* in the gospel. We do not speak of the heavy burden that it imposes on the priest; it is especially under this aspect that it appears to us *inhuman*. The priests would tell us so with one voice if they dared. No; never did the divine wisdom that speaks in the gospel institute anything of the kind.

The practice of the Church of Rome has made of penitence, as of many other things, only a dead letter, a letter that killeth; but for all that it has not prevented pious souls from re-infusing, as far as they were personally concerned, the spirit into the letter. Penitence, as it was understood and practised at Port-Royal, was neither a superstition nor a

mercenary transaction. It would be well if it could be adopted such as it appeared there (the question of form being reserved), to fill up a too palpable void in the piety, otherwise sincere enough, of a great number of evangelical Christians. We must protest; this is right and necessary; but we must not protest indiscriminately against everything. We must separate ourselves from that which is evil, but not separate ourselves from the good.

In a Christianity already enfeebled, the worship of the Virgin debilitated what remained of Christian.

A gospel that adores the Virgin, and gives her a share in the mediatorial power and the divinity of the Messiah, is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As to my aversion to the worship of Mary, it is as keen as well founded. This corruption of Christianity is, in my eyes, one of the most fatal inventions of the spirit of evil. At the present day, it exceeds all bounds. The great Catholic doctors of the seventeenth century would be appalled at it.

To raise an idol in the place of the true God! But nothing less is done. True, this idol has sometimes a name, sometimes none; but in both cases alike, the idol is our own heart. Yes, it is his heart, his carnal heart, that the deceived Catholic adores under the name of the Virgin; it is to his weakness, to a remnant of incredulity, that he unwittingly renders homage. All adorations, except that of God manifested in the flesh, contain this idolatry. All prostrate us before an altar, of which our *Ego* is

the divinity. If God be not alone adored, everything will ere long be God to us, except God himself.

Catholicism both curses and adores woman. In its eyes, woman is alternately the despot and the salvation of the human race. A secret instinct, which we must not probe too deeply, has caused Mary to be placed on the throne of Jesus Christ. The whole of modern Catholicism is urged in this direction by the authority of its priests. The apotheosis of the woman, in the person of Mary, is become the religion of an immense number of the adherents of Rome.

No other dogma, unless it be that of authority, traces a more definite line of separation between Catholicism and the Protestant communions. In this respect, the doctrine of purgatory alone can bear any comparison with it. We may, indeed, setting out from each of the other Catholic dogmas, by hues toned down and shades of language, come very near to the corresponding and opposed dogmas of Protestant symbolism ; but nothing in this latter symbolism corresponds in any way with the adoration of the Virgin ; its contrary, in the dogmatics of the Reformation, is a pure negation ; this adoration is neither the extreme nor the counterpoise of any of our doctrines, which altogether, so to speak, and by their general character, exclude and reject it, so profoundly repugnant is it to the principle of evangelical religion.

The perfectly voluntary and very loving devotion of the Port-Royalists for the blessed Mother of Christ, is a striking proof that these men were, after all, most sincere and thoroughly convinced disciples of what is called, in the Roman Church, *tradition*. And the more lively their attachment to this portion of their religion appears, the more we appreciate the power and vitality of the principle of tradition. From the natural and philosophical point of view, great importance attaches to this principle, which gives a perpetual and never-weakened echo to revelation, and makes of it a continuation of tradition, a sparkling and shining link in the chain of divine communications. Here too there is still truth, and we have only to blow off the dust that covers it; others might say, to rub off the dirt that has clung to the gold.

People ask why it is that more of sincere Christianity is to be found in Catholicism; there is not more, there is less; we have many more souls living of the life within, and "knowing whom they have believed." But it is with Catholicism as with certain countries where temporal goods are very unequally divided, and we see excess of wealth in the case of a few, and excess of poverty in that of all the rest. So, too, Catholicism has some large fortunes, and an enormous amount of pauperism. Thus our condition is far better; but it is no less true that Catholicism has produced *internal Christians* that it would be difficult to parallel in another

communion. It produced them in spite of its tenets; but these men less allowed themselves to be distracted than our brethren do, or were naturally less liable to be distracted by trivial discussions; they passed through them with eyes closed and rapid flight, in order to absorb themselves entirely in practical and spiritual religion. These brilliant examples may lead us to understand how much sectarian disputes detract from the inner life, and what it would at once gain by their suppression.

The principle of Protestantism is the right, or rather the duty, to depend on and appeal, in religion, to God alone; but ceaselessly to make use of this right of interpretation; to divide and subdivide on account of a syllable or a word; to formularize and dogmatize incessantly; to lose, in an unfortunate search after precision, whether doctrinal or disciplinary, the best of our strength or our substance; to make faithfulness consist in the purely servile acceptance of truths with which we have nothing in common, unless we are united to them in our heart; in a word, to mistake theology for religion, controversy for life, words for things, and a stiff-necked obstinacy in defending formulas for genuine zeal and sure signs of progress . . . Oh, be sure this was never the wish of the fathers of the Reformation!

We separate to re-unite; individualism should bring us back to Socialism, Protestantism to true Catholicism, liberty to unity. These are two errors;

the one, that of Catholics who will be so prematurely; the other, that of Protestants who will not become Catholics; the former is the error of the partisans of unity without liberty; the latter that of the adherents of liberty without unity.

Catholics and Protestants, such as history has made you, it does not belong to you to form a league for any purpose whatever; you lack the force of cohesion; you are nothing more than the empty forms of once living beings. The world belongs neither to you, nor to policy, nor to science; it belongs to the only thing which still retains any force at the present moment—to Christianity; yes, to Christianity—the true Catholicism and true Protestantism of humanity,—to Christianity, which is at once liberty and unity, in all the vigour of these two noble terms. It is this spiritual power, this bond of faith and love, this intimate and profound community, which has prepared the holy league, the sacred confederation, of which you have dreamed; that confederation where the regenerated Catholic, Protestant, and Pagan lose their superficial denominations, to be all alike only the heralds of righteousness, the salt of the earth, and the messengers of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Every institution founded upon a special principle inevitably exaggerates it; there is only one principle not exposed to this danger, and this is the principle which includes all others. Thus the prin-

ciple of Christianity cannot be exaggerated, for it is the whole truth, the truth that includes all truths. What has sometimes passed for the exaggeration of Christianity has only been the exaggeration of one of the truths of which Christian truth is composed. When an institution has been evidently created in the interest of one particular truth, we may be sure that, all the weight tending to one extremity, that extremity will drag down all the rest, and will become the base. So is it with Protestantism, which, let men say what they will, is only *room* for a religion. Protestantism was not, in the first instance, a principle, but a fact; it was not Protestantism, but protestation.

Catholicism, on its side, is only the gradual and undated invasion of the principle of unity; and we know what it has made of this principle. After all, Christianity is the strongest; we have only to leave it free to work. The misfortune and sin of Catholicism is the not doing this. In this respect, Protestantism is better; it keeps all doors open, and if unhealthy puffs do now and then come in, air comes in always. Besides, look at facts: much has been said about Protestant anarchy, but it is Protestant unity that should rather have excited attention. The striking agreement that prevails between the symbolisms of the different Protestant Churches, is the true *unity*, of which Catholicism is but the phantom.

Catholicism has placed two phantoms to keep guard over the door of the sanctuary: the one the

pretended Roman unity; the other, the pretended Protestant diversity. It avails itself of the popular prejudice in favour of number and uniformity, erects that prejudice into a principle; makes number and uniformity the criterion of the truth, and is allowed to do so; then, strong in an easily obtained adhesion, it still more easily obtains the confession that uniformity, number, and time are its exclusive property; that novelty, variation, diversity, are the portion of Protestantism. It is there, it is at the threshold, that Catholicism triumphs, and thus all its efforts are directed to retain there those who would of their own accord have gone on further; and, to employ the language of political assemblies, it is by means of *the preliminary question*, and by preventing a thorough discussion, that it, generally speaking, attains the desired end.

It is only a spiritual eye that can pierce the clouds with which this question will ever be surrounded for the worldly gaze. No other can discover all that Roman unity hides of real diversity, and all of real unity that Protestant diversity includes. On the surface, indeed, beyond which the glance of the man of the world does not go unaided, Catholicism has all the appearances of unity, Protestantism all those of diversity. Such a glance, like the human retina, reverses the images of objects, and has nothing wherewith to correct the impression.

The Church neither obtains nor commands anything more than silence; as to unity, that is another thing.

One fact that has not perhaps been sufficiently remarked is, that the principle of authority must necessarily engender its opposite. This is the condition of all absolute governments; they hatch or conceal anarchy. Given human nature, dogmatic unity, I mean living and self-conscious unity, is really impossible. It is absolutely essential, in order to retain so many different tribes under one law, to concede something, nay, to concede much to their respective inclinations. It is by making obedience easy to them that they are kept obedient. Their thoughts are allowed to wander, and above all, are not occupied. Whatever either inherently or accidentally fails to compromise the dogma of authority, is in the first place tolerated, and then in course of time may become usage, rite, religion. The enclosure is so vast that it no longer seems an enclosure; in an immense park one believes one's-self in open country. This is not the effect of cold calculation, but of an insensible fascination. Much time may elapse before one perceives the absence of liberty; to do so, one would have to run up against the boundary-walls, which might indeed happen; only they are so far off, and so few people are sufficiently fond of locomotion ever to reach them. In point of fact, a prison of ten square leagues amounts to liberty, except for those fastidious ones for whom the simple idea of a limit is equal to a prison.

At this price, but only at this, authority is maintained and unity preserved. And when in the

midst of the general institution any particular institution springs up, having for its aim this same principle of unity and authority, condescensions multiply and deteriorate in character. It is possible to become all things to all men, in a very different sense from that alluded to by St. Paul.

The advantage that the Catholic Church possesses in not being infringed upon, either in its doctrine or discipline, by secular authority, is as real as it is important; and we may take occasion to observe, that she is the more inexcusable when she contracts an alliance with the civil power. The disadvantage of Protestantism, until it shall bestow on itself institutions that complete it, is, that the civil power, which is supposed to form part of the Church, may penetrate into the sphere of dogma, by means of external government and of discipline.

Be it so, then! Protestantism, however dismantled it may appear, bears within itself a principle of independence which defends it against its own concessions. If it be not fortified without, it is so, we may affirm, within. Its adherence to political powers makes no part of its constitution; is not its principle, but only its danger. Its principle, for which we have to seek higher, is the authority of the Bible, of the Spirit of God substituted for the authority of a body; it is the suppression of the Church as an essential intermediary between the individual and God. This principle, which cannot be abolished, and which never dies, is stronger than

any system of relationship to the state; it is a spring always wound up, always ready to come into play, which acts at the very moment that it is least expected to do so. That diamond wall that the Roman Church has raised around herself, protects her less surely than does this living wall ever ready to close round Protestantism; this wall, of which truth and the human conscience are the foundation-stones and the bulwarks. Whatever institutions may do, the intercourse between the members of this Church and the source of life and light, may always be renewed and is never completely interrupted. Protestantism will one day give to itself guarantees against temporal power, or against the temptations it may have to adhere thereto, but meanwhile one does not see that the progress of liberty has injured that of Protestantism, nor the progress of Protestantism that of liberty.

The human mind takes long strides, but makes still longer halts. The halt which the Protestant principle has imposed on itself has lasted three centuries. The semi-Catholicism in which we were contented to rest is henceforth exhausted; there is nothing now *vivacious* except thorough Catholicism and thorough Protestantism; there is nothing *living* but the gospel. It is necessary both that our Protestantism should become Christian, and our Christianity Protestant.

Yes, I believe that Catholicism must be destroyed, not with the steel of the law, but by the sword of

the Word. I do not shrink from this consequence of the principle that I have advanced ; I say that a Church which by its intolerance is opposed to the gospel is not a Christian Church ; that a Christian must desire and demand its destruction ; that he must labour with all his strength to bring it about, in order to see it one day replaced by that Church which, conformably to the teaching of its Master, invites us to *prove all things*, and knows no *truth* but what is united with *love*. This is the aspiration, the task of all true Protestants ; as to the means, they are those employed by the apostles.

As extremes touch, we should not be at all amazed if we surprised ultra-Calvinism in the very attitude of Catholicism on these subjects, as on many others ; there are views on the assurance of salvation which amount to the unqualified *opus operatum* and to sheer merit. Only in this lies the difference, and it is incalculable,—nothing chains us to our errors, and everything detaches. The book of grace and faith lies before us always open, like a vase of pure and salubrious perfume, the emanations of which necessarily rise to purify the air we breathe ; and whatever be the variations of Protestantism, it is noticeable that all the symbols of the great Protestant communities are unanimous in bearing witness to those evangelical truths disavowed, or at least attenuated, by Catholicism.

Every complete truth has two sides, at all events in religion, for religion is essentially the mediatrix

which leads back all the dualities of human existence to unity ; and, for the very reason that it reconciles, it confesses them. Every truth is composed of two truths united by a mystery ; the abuse of the one produces the abuse of the other ; Catholicism and Protestantism, considered as half-truths, mutually occasion, engender each other ; and thus it is that, setting aside all passion and interest, it is conceivable that the two dogmas of which we speak should both have been formally combated by pious men. Human weakness makes it intelligible that those who thought they discerned the germs of individualism and antinomianism in the Reformation, should throw themselves into another extreme, by exalting both the authority of the Church and the importance of works. They did not see—wonderful to say—that the *merit* of Christianity, if we may use such an expression, is just to have presented these two opposite ideas to the world ; for there was no religion for humanity except on two conditions,—on one side, that man should as to his belief cease to be the slave of the soil, and, on the other, that he should renounce the chimerical hope of bestowing on himself the alms of salvation. Under different names, the authority of the Church and the merit of works were old-world prejudices that Jesus Christ came to dispel ; and anti-Reformationism re-connects itself over the cross with the doctrines of Egypt, Rome, and Athens.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH AND ITS ADVERSARIES.

I. DIFFERENT WAYS OF ATTAINING TO CHRISTIANITY.

1. *Apologetics, their Necessity ; Different Systems of Apology ; Indifference.*

THEOLOGY is a garrison which only saves itself by "sorties." In proportion as we fear less, there will be the less to fear ; but to refuse battle would be to avow defeat. It is, besides, with polemics as with war. He must be mad who, seeing improvements made in the art of attacking places, should not care to improve the art of defending them, nor place himself, by choice of weapons and skill in using them, on a level with his adversary. It may perhaps be necessary to give up certain artillery,—that is to say, certain arguments and theses,—but what of that, if better weapons replace those we get rid of ?

The Christian should not absolutely avoid encountering objections, for to answer the objections of unbelief is to give a reason for the faith he holds. Those who address their objections to a Christian, should not part from him with the unfortunate impression that he believes without proof, and that his faith is but a stupid prepossession.

This is not, however, equivalent to saying that he is bound to point out the feebleness or falsehood of each one of their arguments ; it is enough if, to the reasons on which others base their infidelity, he gently and respectfully opposes those on which he rests his faith. From some we may require more than this, from none can we ask less ; for the most ignorant as well as the most learned has reasons for believing,—not perhaps of a similar nature, but of equal value to those of the *savant* and philosopher.

It cannot be denied that perfect truth corresponds in principle to perfect virtue ; but this is only in principle. If this correspondence were to become a fact, constant and universal, it would, I believe, render all ulterior proof of the truth of doctrines superfluous. This one miracle verified, incontrovertible, would cause all miracles to be believed in ; none would find it difficult to accept the infallibility of a doctrine in presence of the impeccability of its partisans. But this proof of the absolute truth of any doctrine whatever does not, and never will exist.

It is on this that the necessity of a formal apology rests, as well, perhaps, as that of the whole of theology.

Christian apologies have generally been more or less occasional works, and that in two ways. Often they have been intended to repulse a recent attack directed to some particular point ; and still more often without being as visibly provoked by the

urgency of the hour, they have, under a great appearance of generality, been, in fact, a special antidote to that form of unbelief which prevailed at the time of their appearance. Occasionally, even, removing some of the means in their power, and attacking their adversaries, as it were, on the flank, they have only brought into relief one side of Christian truth, one reflection of its light, one ray of its beauty, one character of its greatness.

If apologies have prepared or even effected conversions, the immense majority are converted by a different process, that is to say, in the way of intuition.

We may, however, conceive another style of apology ; one that should not wait for provocation, but itself provoke ; that should not have reference to the wants of one century, but to those of all time ; that should not attack one species of infidelity only, but, having exhumed from the depths of the human soul the principle of all infidelities, embrace them all, anticipate those that have still to appear, prepare an answer to objections that have not yet been uttered ; and to this end we should perhaps see it penetrate further into doubt than the boldest doubters, dig below the abyss they have dug ; appear in its turn sceptical, with a deeper and more determined scepticism ; in a word, open and widen the wound in the hope of reaching the germ of the evil, and extirpating it. This kind of apology is so peculiar as to require a different name ; in it religion does not

present itself as an advocate, but as a judge ; the mourning robe of the suppliant gives place to the toga of the prætor ; apology is no longer justification merely, but praise, homage, adoration ; and the monument which it erects is not a citadel but a temple. Such is the apology of Pascal.

The true Christian ends by seeming amiable, and indeed the most amiable of men ; the opprobrium that covered him wholly contracts around his convictions merely ; honour surrounds his life, and I have often thought that he might fall from one danger to another, from the snares of disgrace into those of glory, so universal and profound is the esteem that surrounds well-trying Christian virtue. The perfume of a Christian life is very penetrating, —no substance so hard as not to be impregnated with it more or less ; there is no resisting so sweet an attraction long ; we are sometimes won over before we believe ourselves in any way touched ; and just as it is the sight of a spotless holiness realized in Jesus that makes Christians, so it is the sight of a very inferior, but still a real holiness, which prepares them by gradually disposing them to look towards Jesus.

A true Christian is a complete apology for Christianity.

It is evident that God willed that his religion, which is a history, should have proofs resembling those of any other histories. We cannot mistake this his design, unless we have never opened the

Bible, and in order to despise it despised God himself. But after all, three things remain certain : *first*, that these proofs have not yet silenced, and will be long before they do silence infidelity, which now seems no more destitute of specious arguments by which to weaken faith in our minds than in the days of St. Paul ; *secondly*, and equally certainly, that after having believed on those proofs, there remains a work more important than the first, namely, to identify ourselves by the soul with the truths we have received through the mind, which alone amounts to genuine faith ; and, *thirdly*, that this last process happily not only completes the former for many, but suffices of itself alone, and replaces all other demonstrations.

In practice, and as a means of popular persuasion, nothing can be so valuable an introduction as the sight of good works and fruits of faith ; nor will anything ever supply the want of it. It would even constitute for the majority of men an imposing presumption in favour of Christianity ; but it cannot absolutely take the place of those proofs that result from the consideration of its doctrines.

Were there only one single true Christian in the world, Christianity would be no less true, and each of us equally guilty for not having believed in it.

A well-written book on some of the individual or social applications of Christianity, is, for a large class of persons, the best dogmatic teaching, and in the

first instance the only one accessible ; and to make use here of the technical terms of the subject, preaching specially calculated for the converted, is very often the most efficacious *appeal*.

Even if truth were to be here below for such as seek it, only an occasion of troubles and dangers, even if that were false which Scripture affirms respecting godliness being profitable for this life, as well as for that to come, yet still it would be evident that the body is as nothing compared to the soul, time compared with eternity ; that our true life is hidden in God ; that God alone is our end and the accomplishment of our destiny ; and that whoever makes up his mind to live without God and without hope in a world that he may have to quit utterly on the morrow, places himself, by that very fact, out of the pale of human reason, and almost of human nature. It is because these truths are evident that we despair of proving them to such as reject them. God alone has arguments equal to such a climax of folly.

It is absurd, no doubt, to wish to make a religion ; as well might we bestow alms upon ourselves with the money just taken from our own purse ; it is absurd, I say, to wish to make one, but infinitely reasonable to seek one.

What Christianity demands from the indifference of our society, tolerant only by dint of indifference, is inquiry, is true and earnest examination. To examine is, it is true, only to set out towards truth, but in the present state of mind it seems as

though to examine were almost to have reached the goal ; so difficult, so rare is examination, and so easily can we foresee the result of an earnest examination of Christianity.

All those who determine to reach truth, in any department whatever, are called to a great trial,—that, namely, of resisting those torrents of diverse opinions which alternately threaten to sweep them away ; and of resting their conviction on the basis of a patient examination, an impartial study of the truth ; in a word, to believe of and by their own-selves, and not upon the faith of others.

What Rousseau said of science, entirely, with the exception of one word, applies to religion. He would have the child invent science ; we would have the man find his religion. What another great man said of the pursuit of truth being more important, to his thinking, than even truth itself, applies also to religion, if, as we believe, he meant to say, that the first of all truths is to desire and to seek truth. Truth without the search after truth is only half the truth. The search in this matter is as essential as the possession. We only know well what we have not always known ; we only believe after having doubted ; we are only conquerors after having been conquered. And this is why, in this matter, our first effort should tend to place man in a position to choose.

We should already have obtained an important result if we could bring on the battle-field whatever

of conscientious opinion there might be in the world. This is the first duty to be fulfilled, the first advantage to be pursued. This would be the first victory of truth. Where candour and clearness are, there truth is not far off.

Man is not made for indifference; doubtless he can feel neither hate nor love for things that are completely foreign to him, and towards which no circumstance directs his attention; but all that touches him nearly, all that may have an influence upon his fate, or even all that he sees excite general interest, becomes to him an object of some feeling or other.

Indifferentism is the negation of the principles of all morality. Truth and virtue, which men seek to divide, are the same thing in principle. Virtue, which is but the realization of our real relations to the Author of our being, necessarily supposes the knowledge of those relations. To accomplish the final end of his being, man must know it, and to do this, he must know God.

In every indifferent person, there is the material of an enemy, a material which only waits an opportunity to unfold itself.

There is in the heart of the indifferent man, in spite of his impartiality and his pretended respect for sincere convictions, a fund of vexation, ready to vent itself on the man who comes, in the name of an idea, to trouble the repose of the world, or to give a different course to its agitations.

There is no principle which can hold out against the want of affection and sympathy ; the indifferent man, however favourable he may theoretically be to liberty of opinion, soon tires of protecting people who, according to him, would have done just as well, both for themselves and the world in general, had they remained quiet. Let them cut out their own way ; let them become strong, and they will be defended. To go to the help of the conqueror is the universal wisdom. Nay, more, if the persecuted opinion becomes dominant, and the basis of the national religion, the indifferent man will belong to it in his own way, by participating in all the external practices of a faith that he does not share,—the love of quiet composing all his religion. Hypocrisy forms part of his system ; to defend his right of believing nothing, would be to believe something, would be to render a homage to truth, and he has said, “ What is truth ? ” Hypocrisy, then, is the natural complement of indifference, only it is decked with a better name ; it prefers to pass as condescension, accommodation, sacrifice to the interests of peace ; it urges, after the example of a philosopher, “ that the world has nothing to do with our thoughts, but that appearances are due to the public.”

Indifferentism is already a degeneration of the soul ; and no doubt it must be by fall after fall, by a long series of degradations, that the human soul has been able to reach a state in which, very far from loving, very far even from fearing God, it has come to care

no longer about him. Indifference in an individual soul is not disease, it is a living death ; indifference in a people is a national death.

Indifference to truth is indifference to God himself ; for on one side it refuses to know him, on the other it excuses itself from loving what he loves, defending what he defends, and choosing what he prefers.

Hate, horrible as it sounds, even hate is better than indifference. There is a homage in hatred. It is an avowal that one has at least felt those truths in the gospel that wound and condemn. It is a strange but an authentic manner of revealing our reception of the message of peace ; it is a beginning of intelligence which may be succeeded by fuller intelligence. Hatred has often been the prelude to love, the soul having passed victoriously through a solemn crisis. But indifference, which denotes the greatest possible distance between man and God, is the last of outrages.

A Church may die of languor in full orthodoxy ; and there is a neology which threatens it less than a certain dogmatic precision. The worst of all heresies is indifference.

The indifferent man who has risen into enmity can never fall back into indifference. There is only one change now for him, that is, to love.

2. *Different Proofs of Christianity; Authority (External and Internal, Intellect and Conscience); Evidence; Miracles; Aspirations towards Christianity.*

The true way in religious knowledge lies not from God to man, but from man to God; before he knows himself, man cannot know God.

Long or short, direct or circuitous, every road is right which leads to the foot of the cross.

Every truth leads to truth. No doubt, Christ is the centre of all truth; but to show that Christ is the centre, we must speak of the circle and the most remote circumferences.

Considered with respect to different modes of believing, humanity divides itself into two camps. In fact, and, as it were, of course, it is authority that prevails. Many more things are believed and practised on the faith of others than on the faith of proofs.

Conventional authority is departing; we must fall back on that other, which can be wielded by every interpreter of truth convinced of that truth.

If our personal beliefs be founded on examination and experience, we should be wrong to try to give them weight by authority; for to remove them from the ordeal of examination and the combat of discussion, would give room for supposing that our conviction was not as well established as we would

have it believed to be, and by a chimerical and contradictory respect for truth we should very seriously compromise its interests.

The property of authority is not to be matter of choice, not to depend either upon taste or temperament, but on reason and conscience.

There is no well founded and constantly useful authority but the one we respect. It is more beautiful, more rare, and more important to be believed, than to be obeyed.

The true power in this world is not authority, but influence. Influence is the queen of the world. Proud and refined minds know this well; they are not greedy of power, but of influence; they reckon that influence, and influence alone, can give them power; and even power, to consolidate and extend itself, needs to take and preserve the form of influence. The power which only aims at being power, and disdains influence, has but a feeble and precarious existence.

Christianity was never so strong as when, like its Author, it had not where to lay its head. Quietly, insensibly, it changed ideas, and through ideas all besides. It was still nothing in the state, when it was already everything in society; it had been obeyed in a thousand things, when it was believed to have hardly been listened to; it still seemed a slave, when in point of fact, it was already master. It was *Æsop* in the house of *Xanthus*.

The peculiarity of the theocratic error which ruled

the whole of the middle ages, was to combine, and even to prefer, in matters of religion, authority to influence. Now, Christianity is a religion of influence. Religion is not an institution; it is a virtue; it is a principle of life and impulse deposited in the human soul. It is, if you prefer it, a word which, in the first instance, speaks from without, and soon after becomes an internal word, so that it may be defined as a new soul given to humanity. The soul of this soul must be liberty, not authority, I mean external authority; influence, then, is the only mode of action which belongs to it. This is why the Christian religion has renounced the theocratic element; but in repudiating it, it has not renounced the empire of the world; it has rather secured it; for whoever possesses influence necessarily holds the helm. This influence, moreover, exerts itself in different degrees upon different individuals; it reaches the very depths of the soul in many, and makes them Christians; it touches the rest of mankind, and raises them as far as Christian civilisation; *it inspires the morals, morals dictate the laws*; and consequently laws are Christian without being known or believed to be such. What of that? The end is attained; a certain number of individuals are Christians, as they ought to be, and the whole society is Christian, as it can be.

Authority is a torrent, influence a gentle stream; the torrent, mingling with the stream, increases its speed, but sullies its purity. Guard against these two currents flowing in the same channel. Keep

them apart. Let what is of the legal order remain professedly legal, and what is spiritual be purely spiritual. It is enough that the torrent and the stream should unite at their mouths; enough that in social results, once accomplished, we can no longer distinguish what belongs to authority from what springs from influence, so obedient are these results to what authority has established, and so conformable to what influence has inspired. And they will ever be so, do not doubt it: the legislator will be found to have enjoined all that morals dictated; morals, too, will have consecrated all that creeds demanded.

Submission to authority in matters of religion conceals beneath the name of obedience too real a liberty;—it is a very melancholy one, no doubt, the liberty not to see, not to choose, not to advance by one's-self, the liberty to remain weak and poor, not to watch over the treasures of the soul. But have not we seen nations fight for slavery, and devote themselves for despotism? and shall we wonder to see individuals make some sacrifices to keep aloof a liberty which would impose greater ones?

Authority has its roots in our nature, and in the general condition of the human mind. Just as in our temporal relations we are born members of society, so in our spiritual, we are as it were born believers. We find, on entering the world, a government for our thoughts as well as a government for our liberty; creeds have been prepared for us as well as a civil

condition. We must needs, while waiting for better things, accept in the meantime the order of circumstances and ideas in which we begin to live. The first, and for a long time the only authority, as far as we are concerned, is that of our parents; they give us their morality, their religion, as they give us our food. Our internal liberty, the personality of our thought, only develops slowly; and beyond the circle of the family it finds another, which, although more wide, is no less firmly closed. Society is another family, where certain hereditary or conventional opinions prevent the formation of our own, and for a time oppose the free scope of our individuality. We have had but too many subjects and occasions to deplore the empire exerted over internal liberty by imitation, which is a transubstantiation of all into each; and by habit, which binds us to ourselves, and despotically chains our present to our past; and we can only consider as a symptom of degradation, that tendency which impels us alternately, or even at the same time, towards a wild liberty and a blind submission, as if man never knew how to submit or to free himself to any purpose. But, after all, we must ask ourselves what would become of individual passions and imaginations, if the new-born mind were not laid in ready-made opinions, as in a quiet and comfortable cradle? We must ask ourselves whether faith in authority be not the necessary novitiate of all intelligences and all consciences; and if human liberty do not require,

in order to prove itself, to bear the encounter and resistance of those opinions of the mass, of that force of example, which alternately, and as it were indifferently, impose good and evil, error and truth. We must ask ourselves whether individuals—I mean men such as sin has made them—would not be worse on the whole, more hurtful to themselves and to others, supposing them preserved from this encounter, than they are under the unjust empire of an authority which, after all, cannot fail to have derived some of its inspirations from the general interest.

In religious matters, the true authority, the true general reason is conscience, immutable, inextinguishable, uniform, identical, which, as soon as it is aroused, speaks to all equally of responsibility, sin, and condemnation.

Some will be brought over to Christianity by historical or external arguments; they will seek to prove to themselves the truth of the Bible in the same way as the truth of any other history. This settled, they will confront the prophecies contained in those ancient documents with the events that occurred centuries later; they will assure themselves of the reality of the miraculous facts related in those books, and will deduce thence the necessary intervention of that divine power which, alone disposing of the forces of nature, could alone interrupt or modify their action. Other men, less fitted for such researches, will be more struck by the intrinsic evi-

dence of Holy Scripture ; will find the state of their soul perfectly depicted there ; its wants perfectly expressed ; the true remedies for its diseases perfectly prescribed. Impressed with an inimitable character of truth and candour, feeling themselves, in short, stirred, changed, renewed inwardly by the mysterious influence of these sacred writings, they will thus have acquired a conviction that they cannot always explain to others, but which is none the less legitimate, irresistible, and immovable. This is the double road by which one penetrates into the asylum of faith. Now it behoved the wisdom of God, behoved the justice, and we are bold to say, the honour of his government, to open out to man this double way ; for since God willed that man should be saved by knowledge, He pledged himself by that very will to furnish him with the means of knowing.

While we accept each for himself truth in that form, and under that aspect, that God has judged satisfactory or necessary, we must not apply it to others to whom this form and aspect may be unintelligible. We must present this truth to them not under its individual or subjective form, but its general, objective, absolute form, which is, and ought to be, at the bottom of all the different representations we can make to ourselves of it ; in other terms, under that simply human form, which is at once and by that very fact its divine form, since God alone could reach and embrace the most purely human element

beneath all individualities, whether personal, national, or secular. Would you then convert as you have been converted, make use of the Word of God. Would you yourself be really converted, and have within you all the consequences of a true conversion, speak to yourself in God's language; not the words, not the phrases only, but the thought of God, his exact thought, his whole thought.

And let no one come to allege against the necessity of a positive and precise dogmatic system. I know not what breadth of views, which is thought to be more surely found in the vagueness of rationalistic doctrine; or the interest, considerable, no doubt, of the application of Christianity to social affairs; or the importance of not depriving the gospel of that philosophical character which might recommend it to thinkers, a character, I own, that the gospel must necessarily have, supposing the gospel to be true. These are the very considerations that speak on the side of our own thesis. Breadth? It is only to be found in positive Christianity, precisely defined, sharply accented; it is this alone that secures to all the faculties of our nature, all the wants of our soul, the greatest scope and widest space possible; whereas there is not one of these wants or faculties that rationalism does not crush back and cramp; to give room to what?—only to that which should be compressed, to fleshly passion, the immoderate thirst of knowledge, the repugnance to believe and pray, and in all things the hatred of God's yoke. Or do you

urge the claims of society ; why, what are you thinking of? Society will only be *organized* on the day that it becomes evangelical ; and there is not one of the principles of Christianity which is not adapted and destined to re-establish order in some corresponding point of social existence. All our political systems sin in being more narrow than humanity ; the gospel alone is of equal vastness.—Philosophy is the last cry we hear ; philosophy appealed to against orthodoxy and in favour of rationalism. To our thinking there is no more striking anti-truth than this. It is while remaining within the pale of positive Christianity that we may see a religious, clear, coherent, and complete philosophy triumphantly organize itself ; it is thence that we see life enlighten and order itself, problems resolve themselves, dualities melt on all sides into glorious unities, of which each is a mirror and a living impress of the Supreme unity ; whereas, from the point of view of rationalistic Christianity—I say not Christian rationalism, for this last exists, it is legitimate, and I have just described it,—from that narrow and oblique point of view there is no solution possible, no regular co-ordination of facts, no system without a flaw, that is to say, no philosophy.

You have been advised, and you advise your own selves, to use all the means you possess. If one thinks only of those which are drawn from pure authority itself, I should rather say, do not make use of all your means. Faith is an affair of the heart, and the heart only lives by liberty ; see then

that you leave room for liberty. Do not employ all your ascendancy; beware of adding to its natural action and straining its spring. Guide rather than command; prefer inspiring to imposing. Refuse on occasion a portion of the powers delegated to you, and know how to recall liberty to self-respect. This liberty is God's share; and it is in order that something may be left to be done by God that you must not want to do all. Your chief business is to point out the source, and, above all, to recommend and make it desirable by your example. . . . You want to reign in order that God should do so, but aim at reigning over the living, not the dead. Do not forget that authority ill administered has more disastrous and permanent effects than the absence of all authority.

In religious matters, the true gist of the question is this: Does the religion proposed to us change the heart, unite it to God, and prepare it for heaven? If Christianity produces these effects, we shall be content to allow the enemies of Christianity to revolt at their ease against its mysteries, and even to treat them as absurd.

Yes, truth has its evidence in itself, and when we furnish ourselves with external proofs before believing in the truth, it is at bottom much as if we lit a candle to see the sun. So it is with us, however, and since it is so, no doubt so it ought to be.

We may admit in principle that true religion has for the heart an evidence above all certainty,

otherwise acquired ; only this is a kind of conviction which, not having been obtained by reasoning, is not communicable by reasoning. He who believes in this way can exact nothing from the infidel ; but he may demand from him whom reason has rendered a believer, the recognition and respect for the legitimacy of a faith acquired by the heart.

Truth has its titles in itself, it is its own proof, it demonstrates in showing itself ; and the heart is the mirror of the truth ; but this heart, ill placed, does not reflect the light until a divine hand have turned it on the side of the sun ; the heart needs to be *inclined*. That within us which receives the truth, which knows, believes, and loves, is not the heart as it is by nature ; it is the heart *inclined*, and, above all, the heart humbled,—the heart “ proffering itself by humiliation to inspiration,” as Pascal expresses it.

The epoch in which we live seems to have taken for motto the apostolic words, “ your reasonable service.” It demands, perhaps, less the exposition of the external proofs of religion than the demonstration of its internal coherence, and of the fitness between it as a whole, and the whole of the life of the heart and of human affairs. It demands that Christianity should give account of its philosophy. It is not that it wants a philosophy in exchange for Christianity, but a philosophy from the hands of Christianity. It is not either an intellectual display that it solicits for a few lofty minds ; it is a satisfaction in which it would have the popular reason

share. And what it claims as an end it also asks as means; it considers that Christianity thus taught would become for a people the most keen stimulant to reflection, the most energetic method of intellectual advancement, and the source of all the certain and healthy ideas upon which it ought to order its life.

Although the gospel be capable of proving itself, without any human assistance, to the souls that thirst for righteousness, yet nevertheless the examination of such multifarious, rich, and beautiful proofs, is a natural means that God often employs to originate or consolidate faith.

Arguments do not change the man. It is life that teaches life; God that reveals God.

There is a labour of the conscience; in the interests of their salvation, all are invited to think; and to think well is, according to the judicious remark of a great man, the principle of ethics; but it is essential that every one should be able to undertake this labour, able to think his actions; that every one, whatever his condition, should be certain at the end of the labour of meeting with truth, I mean with truth concerning his duties. We all feel that there is justice and necessity in this, and that, without reversing our ideas of God, we could not conceive his having made virtue or practical truth the privilege of much leisure or acuteness of intellect. All have sufficient time to be virtuous, mind enough to be saved.

Knowledge does not necessarily imply an upright heart or a benevolent character, and it is unfortunately too common to see the fairest gifts of genius united to a deplorable fund of egotism and to the greatest corruption of morals. God seems to have *prepared* the truths of human science for his friends and his foes indifferently. It is not so with religious truth, these God "has prepared for them that love him." Not that he has excluded men of genius or learning from their possession; but genius and learning do not suffice here as in other sciences. Love is necessary, love is the only true interpreter of gospel truths.

If it be a sort of necessity for the well-trained mind to embrace a just idea and to form a wise resolution, it is not assuredly that brutal necessity which, misapprehending our moral constitution, addresses itself to what there is of vile and earthly in our nature. It is that sublime necessity to which the greatest geniuses and the most admirable men have joyfully obeyed; that necessity to which it will be eternally glorious to yield, to do so being the noblest use of liberty.

Moral necessity is stronger than logical, and the parts of the most regular syllogism are less strictly connected than sentiments which are but a mutual continuation.

The heart is an organ of knowledge as well as each of the senses; and in many matters reason can only deal with data afforded by the heart.

We may imagine that we have all when we have the intellectual conviction of this truth,—that God, and even a personal God exists. But it is little to know God without possessing him, and, indeed, we can only know him on the condition of possessing ; for if the whole meaning of the word to *know* be in certain cases intellectual, it is not so in all ; and one might say, generally speaking, that intellectual knowledge is but the preliminary, the envelope or the logical impress of true knowledge.

The very knowledge of the intellect, *as such*, has need of the heart. Without the desire to see, one does not see ; in a great materialization of life and thought, one does not believe in spiritual things ; many persons have eyes to see and see not ; many who have eyes need to be turned to the side of the light ; they have to be taught the language in which instruction must be conveyed to them ; all the arguments drawn from spiritual notions are lost, or seem ridiculous to men to whom these premises are wanting.

The flesh is inert ; the flesh only follows the spirit reluctantly and afar off ; that is to say, when our interest finds itself engaged in a question, it attaches itself, suspends itself, like an enormous weight, to the wings of our spirit, and prevents it from soaring towards truth. What looked simple appears complicated ; what was clear becomes obscure, and the very question that a word would otherwise have settled,

now re-appears as scarcely impinged upon at the end of the longest discussion.

It is commonly said: "To know is the way to love." This is true, but it is still more true that we must love in order to know. "Every one that loveth knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7). Why, then, do we not know Jesus Christ? Why does not his divinity shine forth to our eyes? Because we do not love him nor cultivate his presence. To cultivate his presence is the way to know him as man and also as God. In comparison with this method, all those that we derive from science, logic, and history are little worth. They are preliminary, and they establish doctrine in the Church; but if for the individual they are all, they are as yet nothing.

The charm of Christianity for the heart, lies just where the intellect is most unjustly offended. What repels and attracts is one and the same thing; it is loved just for what in it is rejected, and rejected on account of what in it is loved. If it only contained the elements that are extracted from it, those vague promises of liberation, that future so difficult to characterize, who would ever have approached it with love, who would continue so to approach it? I know not if, as it is expounded to us now-a-days, it could ever have made martyrs, —I doubt it much; but at all events their blood would never have been the seed of the Church; it would have died as soon as born, and nothing in the night of centuries would have been able to resus-

citae it. If oblivion have not devoured it, if still it exists, still offers to the systematic mind of our age a subject of speculation and experience, it is only thanks to what is rejected by those fine wits who, taking the husk of the fruit for its nutritious portion, reject the pulp and keep the rind ; it only lives, has only lasted in virtue of that position, will only so continue to last, because it is that alone which will always be in the eyes of humanity, human, fundamental, eternal.

There are problems to the root of which the philosopher must descend, not as philosopher but as man, with the whole of his reason, no doubt, but also with the whole of his conscience, his sensibility, and even his imagination. Philosophers and economists have often fallen into the same error, which plainly shows that in the workroom of thought an extreme division of labour has its disadvantages. The political economist has said : " I am inquiring how wealth produces and distributes itself. Stand on one side and let me pass ; let some one else see to all the rest ;" which rest, by the way, is morality, civilisation, happiness. The philosopher, in his turn, comes and says : " I am not a man, but an intellect ; I attach myself to ideas ; let others occupy themselves with the rest ;" which rest, again, is truth ; for truth in certain matters is a fact, a life, or it is nothing. Now I take exception to that economist on the subject of happiness, for he disregards it ; and to that philosopher on the subject

of living truth, for it is only for abstract truth that he cares.

We must not leave out of the account any element of which man is composed. We must bring with us, and must throw into the discussion, our fears and hopes, our joys and sorrows, our external and internal life,—spirit and soul, the man of time and the man of eternity. It is thus, that is to say as complete, living, and personal, that such questions ought to find us ; as otherwise they will mock our efforts and laugh at our certainty.

In a sceptical epoch, when one sees all convictions relating to the immaterial world falling to powder, it is very comforting to be able to point to an intact moral faith ; and when we say intact we do not mean preserved in prejudices like a mummy in a tomb ; but like a living being in vital air and light. It is not with these convictions *alone*, I know, that man and society will be reconstituted, but we are happy to meet with them ; these convictions are a life ; and Christian truth, which dominates them, and to which they owe their birth, prefers to have to treat with life rather than death ; a degree of moral faith is the starting-point and first step towards religious life.

Thought mingles in all our passions, modifies and transforms them at will, and immediately beyond sensations and consciousness, begins a life where our belief becomes a creative power, and where it is enough to believe that a thing is, to make it actually be.

The wisdom of God is infinitely diversified in its procedures. It does not always limit itself to opposing reason to reason, to knowledge a knowledge greater still. The philosopher and the *savant* may find themselves overthrown by their conscience before their mind has had time to stand on the defensive. There is a demonstration of power which prevents all discussion; you were preparing to cross blade with blade,—the thunderbolt falls and disarms you. From the lowest classes of society, remorse and contrition, after having attacked the poor and lowly, rise like a shivering fit to the head of the great social body, and the lofty intellects, the rich of this world, allow themselves to be included in the general conversion. Contrary to what happens in all other spheres, the great, conquered by a strange contagion, become the imitators of the small. This has been seen, and will be seen again. But it remains not the less true that in the social, as in the physical world, the nature of effects always responds to the nature of causes, and that when God has ordained a great national movement, common to all classes at once, he beforehand proportions the means to the end.

Without elaborating themselves from one class to another throughout society, evangelical ideas, pure as a sunbeam that has traversed the empyrean, fall from the Bible into the heart; and if it be, in the first instance, authority that has directed them, individuality soon reclaims its rights; the touched heart appropriates what has been given to it; it gives it,

as it were, a second time to itself; it makes of it a truth of feeling and experience; and (singular fact) individualized in the heart, it is none the less universal, perpetually identical to itself; and its immutable identity from age to age, and from heart to heart, attests it no secular, but an eternal idea.

And what, then, would be the struggles of truth, and where the sublimity of its holy agonies, if it had nothing to combat but error, and to subdue but intelligence? Truth (and we speak here of human truth, of that which makes man himself to be truth) is a transformation of the being that receives it. It is not a certain manner of judging; it is the very light of our judgments; it is what constitutes their worth and the worth of the man himself. Truth is order, harmony, peace; it is man restored to the image of God, it is God in man.

Everything may be guessed except Christianity; this is not to be penetrated from without, and what it has of intimate and special is never to be learnt from simple hearsay.

An element of conviction escapes you, and is not within the power of your reason, which is evidently exhausted and hopelessly perplexed. Enter, and you will see from within what cannot be seen from without; practise Christianity and you will know it.

It is a feature of Jesus Christ's method to make us reason from the species to the genus, in order to practise us in moral consistency, in the logic of conscience and spontaneity.

Pascal did not become a Christian in the common way ; he was the first, or at least the first who in an express manner convoked to the council held on the great question of the truth of Christianity, the moral faculties that had been dispossessed of their right of suffrage in favour of the intellectual faculties. He caused the judgment of this important question to be referred to man as a whole ; he convened new witnesses from the depths of our nature that had not before been called into court ; he insisted that their much-neglected evidence was in itself abundantly sufficient for each one of us, and that, in point of fact, there was neither true light nor effectual conviction for any who had not listened to it.

Pascal supposes, or rather he insists, that in examining ourselves, and examining the contents of the gospel together with our own conscience, we cannot, with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, fail to end in believing. But in his eyes, to believe is inseparable from understanding ; it is to understand with the heart, with that new heart which the Holy Spirit provides. It is the Holy Spirit, not the Church, that is the authority here.

We only become truly Christian in so far as we, at all events, conclude where we ought to have begun. The moment must come for each when his faith shall no more be founded on the wisdom of man, but on the power of God ; and when it can dispense without regret with those arguments which at first satisfied it, just as a conqueror who is

thoroughly assured of his conquest dismisses fearlessly, to return to the shores from whence he set out, those vessels that brought him to the port of the new country.

It is this faith that the apostle characterizes as rooted in the power of God, because, in point of fact, it is not by any ordinary means of which we can give account, but by the power of God, that this evidence is perfected. Truth comes to us quite alone; brings forward no extrinsic testimony, invokes no authority but her own; shows herself, and we believe in her as in the light of day, as in our own existence. Moreover, this has nothing mystical and inconceivable about it but its principle; the fact is at once supernatural and natural. Truth ought to make this impression upon a heart that loves her beforehand, and which, when she offers herself to it, morally recognises her. She ought to have for such a heart an evidence inconceivable by him to whom she equally presents herself, but who has no eyes with which to see her. It is with her as with those half-souls who, according to the idea of an ancient sage, seek their other half in life, recognise it the moment they meet it, and so blend with it as soon as recognised as to be no longer distinguishable. Truth may indeed have failed in the first instance to produce this effect even upon the best-disposed minds; but when we feel the contradictions of nature reconciled, all its enigmas solved, all its discords hushed, when truth is miraculously re-estab-

lished in the soul, how should we not call truth that which has produced this miracle? How deny to one's-self the relations one has actually formed? How doubt of what one feels, and blaspheme what one loves?

A belief thus formed is never lost, can never be lost, any more than an animated being can lose its instinct; for such a belief is become one of the instincts of the soul.

Christianity, wherever it has not penetrated the life, has made a great void around it, and the man who in the bosom of Christendom is nevertheless not Christian, carries about a desert within him. The perspective is luminous for some, gloomy for others, great and solemn for all, and there where reigns not an ineffable joy, reigns an ineffable sadness.

Religious beliefs and the nature of the human mind, are not so related as to necessitate the assent of every normally constituted mind to the truth of these beliefs.

Liberty supposes individuality, which disappears in the irresistible triumph of evidence. It is only on condition of not being self-evident, that a religion is religion.

It is an abuse of the word *evidence* to apply it to historical certainty. The highest degree of historical certainty is not evidence. Certainty, whatever its object or degree, is always subjective, always a personal state; evidence is not an individual, but a human fact, which only requires for its development in any given mind, to meet with the general condi-

tions of humanity there. If the respective characters of evidence and certainty seem to us to melt one into the other on certain subjects, this is often because several parts of our individuality have been left out of the question, and that the proofs have penetrated unresisted into our minds, to which, in that particular case, believing or not believing was alike indifferent. The presence of the Milky Way in the sky is not more evident to all men who have eyes, than the presence of Julius Cæsar in history for every man who can read. But in this lies the difference: while no interest that might attach for us to the presence or absence of the Milky Way in the heavens, could make us hesitate or differ as to the reality of that phenomenon, if some portion of our happiness or satisfaction hinged upon the existence or non-existence of Julius Cæsar, we should not so readily accept the proof of this latter fact; fear, and perhaps desire, would render us circumspect. If salvation depended upon believing in the existence of Julius Cæsar, there would be a temptation to doubt, and one would instinctively seek, in the midst of the most luminous certainty, for some obscure point, some reason for not believing. And, on the other hand, if none of the consequences that do attach to faith in Jesus Christ did attach to it, with what confidence and unanimity would the proofs of his existence and his actions be received! How fantastic and inadmissible, could it arise, would the simple supposition of a work like that of Strauss appear! We therefore hold it essential to the very

notion of religion, that it should be able to furnish proofs capable of satisfying an earnest and attentive mind ; and, on the other hand, that it should require proofs, that it should allow and support examination, and that the adherence it meets with should not result from an imperious evidence, which crushes the mind and leaves nothing for the will to do. But as will is individual, as certainty, which is not obtained without the aid of the will, is equally individual, it follows that religion too is an individual fact. Evidence may have been part of the religion of man before the fall ; it cannot belong to the religion which succeeded it ; and a little reflection will make us feel that this character is incompatible with the idea of religion that dates from thence.

From age to age the mass of testimony to the divinity of Christianity goes on growing, and it is always by coming into collision with the instinctive and often confused affirmations of faith, that doubt has caused light to burst out anew.

In order to accept all the fruits and all the consequences of Christianity, we must believe in it, and have received it not as useful but as true.

We must thankfully proclaim that very often, there, even, where the traces of dogmatic contagion are most visible, and where the conventional Christian most strikingly appears,—even there individual conviction, liberty, the Holy Spirit, have been able to hold their own, which is the lion's share. Out of the conventional Christian, you will joyfully see emerge the pupil of the Holy Ghost, you will see real

life and trials, provoking him, and as it were addressing to him, like watchful sentinels, an abrupt and sudden, Who goes there? which shall obtain a reply as positive as ready, showing that the soldier of Christ has not fallen asleep on his post, under the stifling envelope of forms. It is sweet, too, to verify the presence and the action of the Spirit in a still purer sphere; to see him, if we may venture so to speak, *tête-à-tête* with the soul he has undertaken to awake and to assist, accompanied only by angels at the marvels of solitude. In general, redeeming providence has seemed to apply to its own special domain, as to all the spheres in which humanity moves, that great declaration: "It is not good that man should be alone." Association, however it may be abused, is none the less the condition of almost all developments and perfectionments. But if nothing were ever accomplished independently of it, how should we be able to ascertain incontrovertibly what can be done in the absence of all intermediaries by truth brought into contact with the soul or the intellect? The result in such cases may not be perfection, plenitude, regularity; but it will be pure; the document will be authentic; the testimony simple, and much precious instruction may spring thence for attentive and reflective, and above all, candid minds.

We must, in a certain sort, become mad in order to become wise; that is to say, expressing ourselves more simply: reason must needs humble itself in presence of things that it had not entered

into the heart of man to conceive, and that God has prepared for them that love him. Love opens the mind to thoughts so high, so new, that they must seem madness to such as do not accept them.

There exist among believers many men who have long kept circling around Christianity, the religion of their minds, as around an impenetrable sanctuary ; alternately knocking at all the doors of this asylum without seeing it open ; returning without success to those doors already often tried ; at once believing and not believing ; Christians in their desires, Pagans in their hopes ; convinced and not persuaded ; enlightened and not consoled. It is to these that I address myself. I appeal to their sincerity, and ask : How comes it that you believe, and that as yet you have only the expenses, and not the revenues of your faith ? How comes it that you wear your faith as a yoke that burdens and cramps you, not as wings that raise you above the world and its sorrows ? How comes it that, in the midst of this religion accepted by you, believed in, you are strangers, aliens, and as it were out of your natural atmosphere ? How comes it that you are not *at home* in your Father's house ? Let us lay our finger upon the wound. It is because your heart is not yet touched.

We cannot be believers through tradition ; but tradition may lead us to become such, whether through examining religion with our reason, or fathoming and tasting it with our heart.

The religious want, to be efficacious and fruitful,

must have a moral want at its base. How awaken this want? Our moral life we see needs faith, and faith itself needs a beginning of moral life. Where both are wanting, how awaken the one by the other?

The fear that the gospel causes is a commencement of adherence.

The first promulgation of truths which would never of themselves have occurred to the heart of man, may have need of external signs that are not required in their ulterior transmission.

The motive of the miracle can only be an intention, which by its nature exceeds all miracles, and costs more to believe and admit, than all the miracles put together.

A miracle is an abridged word which admonishes us that the Deity is there, and that the message to which it serves as a seal, is a divine message. On that word we reason, from it we draw conclusions; to that word we yield, we surrender ourselves. All this is highly reasonable, highly worthy of a thinking being; thought has not been suppressed, but excited, directed; man retains the consciousness of what he does and what he becomes; he remains in possession of himself; it is in the opposite case that his conversion would be a magical fact, or rather it would not be a conversion.

Miracles do not *convert*; the sight of them may convince the mind; the heart needs that "demonstration of power" which only belongs to the Spirit of God.

Miracles have been rarely employed to convert,

and have seldom converted ; they have been, for those who have believed, the reward and encouragement rather than the foundation of their faith ; and they have so often had for their only result to confound infidelity and deprive it of all excuse, that we might be tempted to believe that this was their only aim. The same remark applies to the prophecies.

The Spirit of God is seated in the Gospels as on a throne, but this Spirit is not bound, never was so ; he is the author of all the sighs which, rising from this desecrated earth, have sought in the skies a holy and sanctifying God ; of all the efforts made by sinners' souls to appropriate divine power to their weakness ; of all those aspirations towards an unknown gospel, a Christ without a name, a holiness without a type, which ever since the great catastrophe of our moral nature have from time to time, and oftener perhaps than is believed, risen as witnesses to the truth buried beneath the ruins of our innocence.

Bring the gospel within reach of one of those souls to whom the heavenly Spirit has taught the rudiments of faith, you will see by the way in which it will grasp it, that it believed in it beforehand, that it was Christian by anticipation.

There are in the number of those who do not believe, some who gravitate towards the truth with a slow, but persevering and indefatigable step. There is already something of Christianity in those earnest and impressed souls who seek everywhere for another

God than that the world has made for them. For already, without having any clear notion of the gospel, they have received from the Holy Spirit a secret impulse which leads them to seek a God clothed in all the characteristics revealed by the gospel, a God infinitely just, infinitely good, in short, a Providence. Religion holds out her hand and greets them in kind language, even when they seek to strengthen themselves against her; for she discovers in them a thirst after righteousness and peace which she alone can satisfy; and waits for the happy moment when, recognising the striking harmony between Christian revelation and the imperfect revelation of the inner voice, these Christians by anticipation, by desire, by need, shall become Christians also in fact and in profession.

There are men, I freely allow, to whom God seems to have manifested himself, as to Moses on Sinai, with all the majesty of a legislator and a judge. By a celestial favour, that one may well call a beginning of grace, they have felt the greatness, the necessity, the inflexibility of the moral law; and they have at the same time believed themselves able to realize it in their life. Absorbed in this idea, they have set to work, and adding here, retrenching there, correcting everywhere, always pre-occupied with the desire of perfection, they have submitted soul and body to the severest discipline. But when they saw that the battle was endless, the career resultless; that one vice extirpated only made way for another to ap-

pear ; that after so many corrections of detail, life as a whole, the groundwork of the soul, was not essentially altered ; that the old man was still there in his ill-disguised decrepitude ; that the disease from which they had to recover was not a disease but a death, and that for them it was not a question of convalescence but of life ; when, in a word, they saw that labour brought no peace, and yet felt at the same time that the need of peace had grown within them from the very efforts they had made to satisfy it. . . . Then those words of the Saviour were verified in them, “ If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know the doctrine whether it is of God or from men.”

These sentiments which are of earth (the need of salvation), although they manifest themselves in very few, and although the distinct knowledge of Jesus Christ be the only means of awakening them in the majority, these sentiments we loudly attribute to grace, to the influence of the divine Spirit, which has always blown whither it listed, and has never let itself be bound ; we only believe that there have been, in all times and all places, involuntary witnesses to the great truth which is at the base of all evangelical truths : we mean the conviction of our first fall, and our impotence to lift ourselves up without the intervention of God himself. Well then, souls in which this truth dawned, before the great truth of divine mediation was revealed to them,—souls, that as much as lay in them, be-

lieved before having seen,—how high do you rank these compared to those souls who, knowing Jesus Christ, believe in him with a literal and passive faith, not with a free consent but with a servile belief; and which, to say all at once, do not go out to meet him, do not embrace him nor crown themselves with his merits, his glory, and their dependence upon him? Which of these best fulfil the conditions of true faith? To whom might their faith be most reasonably imputed as righteousness,—to those whose faith is complete but dead, or those whose faith is incomplete but living? To those whose faith is a work, or to those whose faith is not a work? To those who have not known the Saviour, but have desired him, or to those who, knowing him, neither desire nor appreciate him? To those who believe in a Saviour, or to those who believe in the need of a Saviour? Your own consciences will decide.

He with whom we must be clothed has not yet been manifested to such as these last, because some obstacle, springing from within and from without, has prevented them hitherto from believing in Jesus Christ. They will believe in him one day; God will not leave incomplete a work, the best part of which is already accomplished in them; but the painful trial may be still prolonged; the prayer of the Church must labour with them, must fight for them; from out the temple and the secrecy of the closet, those who have been before them delivered must cry

to the great Liberator : " They believe, Lord, they believe ; help thou their unbelief."

3. *Objections.*

Christian truth, because it was truth, could not fail, at its first appearance, to have all the world against it. For the same reason, it necessarily subjected by degrees the multitude to itself.

If the Christian doctrine, despite its eternal youth and eternal beauty, meets so many spirits that reject it, this is not because the majority of them have any arguments that can prevail against it, or any system to oppose to it. Some may indeed for a moment appear to argue in form, but you will soon see them fall back upon the declaration that this doctrine is too obsolete and effete for them. They for their part are apparently too young and fresh. But the fact is that they are too old ; that this doctrine must be received with the soul ; that in order to receive it, there must be in the soul some living points, even were they bleeding ; that they lack these, lack, I was going to say, the soul itself ; that amidst all this confused baggage of words, maxims, opinions, they have lost the key to the treasure ; that more especially the great ideas or great feelings of duty, sin, responsibility, only exist within them as faded traditions, as memories of another world, as memories of a memory. May we not go so far as to say that in them moral truth has

nothing to fix on ; these lack soil for the tree we would fain plant within them ? They have nothing to afford it but an arid, angular sand, fit only to cut its roots. Look, on the contrary, at those men in whom the clearings of the mind have not obstructed the ways to the soul ; look at those rude men, savage perhaps, but simple : Christian truth is suddenly presented to them ; would one not say that they had been waiting for it ?

At sight of the great mystery of salvation, does not their soul, exercised with the need of expiation, happy in a discovery that perhaps reveals its wants at the very time it satisfies them,—does not this soul of theirs, more happy than Archimedes, exclaim *Eureka* ? Does it not in this its joy, a joy bathed in tears and fraught with courage, show a vigour and freshness unknown to brighter minds worn by thought ? And what has been needed to bring about this result ? Little study in truth, little meditation. Such have found and eagerly picked up what they did not know they had lost. They have recognised what they were not aware of having ever known. They have, let us rather say, re-found their own selves in the highest elements of their being. Christian truth is in fact only the eternal moral truth in its plenitude, its whole life, and stamped for the second time with the divine seal. Now, moral truth is not so much learned as recognised.

The faith of the Christian finds three distinct classes of objects in the whole of evangelical reve-

lation : metaphysical truths, historical truths, moral truths. In these three respects our moral faculties meet with an application in Christianity. Purely metaphysical truths are inconceivable ; in order to admit them submission is needed. Historical truths are more or less complicated, attention is necessary for their reception. Finally, amidst moral truths there are some that condemn us, to receive them requires humility ; others that lay us under obligation, to acquiesce in them there must be courage.

We must observe that truths of the last class, moral truths, are represented in the gospel as the most important ; that they are so in point of fact, since their adoption by the heart forms the real end of revelation, and the true motive to newness of life ; and lastly, because adherence here is most difficult, because experience constantly teaches us, on one side, that persons who have adopted the truths of the first two orders have shrunk in alarm from those of the last ; and, on the other hand, that the repugnance inspired by moral truths has often prevented men from adhering to the historical and metaphysical truths of the Bible ; as also because the acceptance of the Bible's moral truths has, in many cases, led to the acceptance of those metaphysical and historical truths, regarding which the mind retained some doubt. It is easier perhaps to submit one's intellect to the mystery of the incarnation, than to submit one's heart to this humbling doctrine : a Saviour our only resource.

Is it the fault of truth if, our heart being divided, our mind prove so too, and if what would be axioms to man in a state of innocence become problems to fallen man?

If we are bent upon making clearness and simplicity marks of truth, we run in many cases the risk of embracing error while meaning to embrace truth; for error has generally the advantage over truth in point of simplicity. Error frequently does nothing but suppress one of the elements of each question, to procure by that arbitrary suppression the shadow of unity. Every truth, in the actual condition of human nature, is composed of two terms that must be reconciled, and only becomes truth in our minds by the reconciliation of those two terms. There are always two elements to be reduced to one, either by their reconciliation, or by the suppression of one or other. The first step towards truth is to recognise the existence of these two elements, the second is to combine without destroying them.

The human mind in general is outside of that condition of simplicity of which some seek to make a mark and sign of truth.

The simplicity of truth is not always the starting-point, it is sometimes the last term of the labours of thought. There are epochs when one must have a great deal of intelligence to affirm, in matters of morality, that twice two make four.

All the sceptics of the last century limited themselves to turning their weapons against the authen-

ticity of the Christian religion ; and I conceive the veracity of the apostles must be one great means of proving it ; but a more direct proof of the truth of the gospel is furnished by the gospel itself. The great fact of the gospel is the God-man, God manifested in the flesh, God assuming our nature to raise and sanctify it. One is only Christian when one has accepted with the heart that truth which was from all time a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness. It is remarkable that the eighteenth century should neither have attacked nor defended the gospel on this fundamental point, while at the present day it is around it that both friends and enemies most eagerly press.

We must confess it : we can better understand those who in good earnest reject the gospel on account of what it contains, than those who accept it through ignorance of its contents. The aversion of the former is more natural than the good-will of the latter. The pre-judgment of these last seems to us so exceptional that we hardly dare to believe it voluntary. In fact, the Christian dogma of redemption is not only—if we may be here allowed the language of the schools—*actually* present in a crowd of scriptural declarations, which place it in the centre of the whole system ; it is, as we have said, *virtually* present everywhere, everywhere for a philosophical and attentive mind ; and we cannot sufficiently wonder that men who possess in a rare degree the habit and aptitude of analysis, should on this single

occasion apply it so ill, or rather make so little use of it.

Do all you can to be understood, but do not postpone acting till you have the certainty of being understood by the whole world, for upon that plan you will never act at all. Truth has received magnificent promises ; but very far from reckoning among them that of escaping all erroneous interpretation, she should, on the contrary, prepare beforehand, and long submit to being misunderstood.

The prejudices which may set a thinking mind in arms against Christianity have their root in our nature, which at least as a fact, is a truth, and, setting out from the fact of the fall, a necessity ; our most fatal errors are human errors ; we must even allow that there is a truth at the root of each one of them ; for they are hardly anything more than the tortuous prolongation of a stem that was originally straight. There is therefore more than one reason why the Christian should not all at once avert his glance from a work directly hostile to his own convictions.

Wonderful to say, formerly the gospel was charged with being too high, and that height was the stumbling-block of the world ; now it is too low,—new stumbling-block ! And indeed it is very true that the gospel is both too high for our carnal sense, and too low for our pride. It is this last reproach that might be expected to arise from an age so intoxicated with pride as ours.

Each can easily understand that Christianity, without retrenching anything from it, might suit any other than himself; but as, at the same time, each rejects it on his own account, it follows that it is rejected by all the world, and that the most human of truths is treated as the least human of errors.

Even were it proved that abuses have been indirectly profitable to religion, would that be any reason for concluding that religion can only subsist by means of these abuses? God can make evil subserve good—we all know that; but to say that he only sustains good by evil, is this not to admit an intimate kindredship, an essential relation between good and evil? And when we affirm that Christianity could only have been preserved by its corruption, have we any right to speak thus of the unfathomable ways of Providence? A work whose only vital condition was its corruption, could hardly be the work of divine Providence.

What is vague has always some false semblance of infinity about it, and under more than one head limits alarm us. We desire, and at the same time fear to know; because if, in one sense, knowledge enlarges, in another it restricts us. The last word, whatever it be, frightens us because it is the last. It seems to us at least that certainty would cause the disappearance of poetry, which is nothing but the spontaneity and liberty of the human intellect; we do not want to read any words below the notes of that dreamy music; nay, it appears to us that

Christianity, with its relative light, has come to write out our life on a clear, hard, cold horizon, and we are annoyed with it, enervated as our minds are, for having combined precision with grandeur.

What we ought to dread for religion are not the assaults that warn; on the contrary, these should be desired; what is really to be feared is the dissimulation that gnaws and putrefies it.

If there have been keen opposition against Christian truth and against Jesus Christ, this is because Christian truth is the whole of moral truth, and because Jesus Christ is its personification. It is under these two aspects that the cross is the culminating point of the history of humanity, one same day having summed up for it in a people the whole power of evil, in one man the whole idea of good.

II. HISTORICAL CHARACTER AND SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. *Mosaism and Christianity.*

Love renders the truths of the gospel intelligible to man; not, indeed, those abstract truths which relate to the very essence of God, and of which any knowledge is equally inaccessible and useless to us, but those other truths that concern our relation with God, and which constitute the very foundation of religion. It is these truths that escape from reason, and are grasped without difficulty by love.

There is a kind of physiology of Christianity to

which some would reduce the whole of apologetic reasoning ; the former explains humanly what apology should explain divinely.

Nothing so much weakens the authority of Christianity, nothing injures its cause so much in the minds of men, as to make of it a link in a chain that, truth to tell, it has broken. That events—that is to say, Providence—hollowed out, in the first place, a channel for this divine stream, is what the most scrupulous of believers will easily grant ; but it is essential not to mistake the source from whence the stream flowed. No natural development, Jewish or Greek, it matters not which, can explain the existence of Christianity. Whatever the progress of ancient thought, there was always an infinite distance between it and Christian thought. It is all over with Christianity in the world when men agree to believe the contrary, and to force a supernatural fact into one of the divisions of the philosophy of history. As far as we are concerned, we much prefer for the Christian religion an outrageous negation to an admiration confined within such limits. Christianity is nothing if it be not like Melchisedec, without father and mother here below, without earthly descent.

Salvation is of the Jews, as the water of a stream flows from a basin hollowed in a rock on the mountain top.

If, possessing the New Testament, we had not the Old, Jesus Christ—present, whatever men may say,

in the old covenant as in the new,—Jesus Christ the Word of the two dispensations, would not teach us all that he teaches us now. The Old Testament is the first chapter of the history of man and the history of God. The experience of the Jews is our experience.

We take the work accomplished by Moses in itself, and affirm that it has the character of a *law*, and not a *religion*. This law has not even the characteristics of a religion.

If God gave a religion to men, he only gave one, and this religion existed before Moses.

In point of religion, Moses furnishes nothing new, nothing peculiar to the dispensation of which he is the organ. Moses himself, as an historian, teaches us that the true religion existed before him; he shows it us upon the threshold of Eden descending as an inheritance to generations whose memory he transmits to us.

When a passage of the Old Testament is quoted in support of some given assertion by a writer of the New, he appeals, by that very fact, to the judgment of the reader; for if it were not thus, if the reader were to believe in the merit of the quotation merely because the writer who makes it is inspired, that writer may just as well not have quoted at all, and confined himself to his own inspiration, especially if the passage be one that it would not now-a-days enter into any one's head to quote with that intention, or to invest with that relation.

Mosaism and Christianity are and can be only two ages of one same truth ; two poles of one axis ; the prow and the stern of one same vessel. Each of the Churches has its watchword and rallying-cry ; that of the Jewish Church is *law*, of the Christian Church *faith* ; but the error to which each is exposed is, of ignoring and excluding the principle to which it does not, indeed, owe its name, but without which it can have neither power nor life. The error of the Jews lies in reducing everything to works, and not rising up to faith ; the error of Christians, in failing to see that true faith is a work, and that if it be not a work, it is nothing. Now these two errors do not so much characterize two epochs, of which one still lasts while the other is over, as two classes of persons, or two tendencies, which reproduce themselves in all times and in all places.

Marvellous contrast ! Christianity was born when, according to all appearances, it never could be born, or must have died at its birth ! But Greece had been prepared to be the nurse of this feeble infancy. The most human doctrine that was ever taught (and this is natural, seeing Christianity was divine) met, at its first step into life, the most human people, taking the word in one only, but one of the most important, of its diverse acceptations. Greek civilisation, intelligence, culture, were human in two ways ; first negatively, in reducing everything, even religion, to the forms and propor-

tions of humanity ; an incarnation of the divine this, but in which the divine was absorbed ; then secondly, in another manner, by cultivating the human elements of man, those which best adapt themselves to his position on earth, to the understanding and discovering the things of this life. In this restricted sense, humanity was never so perfect as in Greece ; none of those elements there, which in the east and the north complicated moral existence and rendered it less adapted to life. To God all things are possible ; he can, he often does, change hindrances into helps ; but if we admit that, in general, God prefers natural means, it seems unlikely that, passing over Greece, he should have trusted the fragile cradle of Christianity to any nation of the north or east. He did well (we believe ourselves authorized to use this expression) to choose the people which, belonging, by its civilisation and culture, to no exclusive direction, was, for that very cause, within the reach of all ; which, by the equilibrium of all human elements, bordered upon all other peoples ; which, sympathetic to all, hostile to none, might be understood by all ; to that people which bore within its breast the east and west united ; in a word, to the people most endowed with universality. Such a people must needs have been *a good conductor* of Christianity ; and since every idea must necessarily take the form of the vessel in which it is contained, such a people could, with less disadvantage than any other, impress its own form on an eternal idea.

Christianity, born as it was outside of those great torrents of public opinion and general morality,—Christianity, born Jew (if one may so speak), and not Greek or Roman,—Christianity connects itself, logically and historically, with the Hebrew monotheism alone, and it is from thence that it invaded the world. In the midst of the general history of humanity, Christianity, if we judge of it Christianly, is a supernatural dispensation; if we judge of it humanly, it is an *accident*. All this new philosophy of history, which, placing in the past and present what is only in the future, and in the hand of God, makes of humanity a living body, a single man of whom the nations are members (though several of these members have never had any inter-communion),—all this philosophy is utterly unable, from its point of view of spontaneous evolution, to explain the fact which created, eighteen centuries ago, a new world, a new humanity, and changed the starting-point of all our ideas. It is not humanity which, by the concurrence of its philosophies and the combined results of its history (the history of three or four nations), brought forth Jesus Christ. He is without father or mother or descent. He does not continue, he interrupts the course of time. He makes the stream of our thoughts and events to flow in another channel. Such is the Christian point of view; and I must here take occasion to say, that a Christian mind can only admit, with very decided reservations, the system of perfectibility.

It finds itself obliged to subtract thence, as dependant upon the pure sovereignty of God, the only fundamental and real perfectionment of humanity. Perfectibility embraces all *except that* ; but we must see plainly all that *that* includes.

2. *Mysteries ; Supernatural.*

The ideas to which man is obliged to ascend, in order to give any dignity to his life, are much rather paradoxes than common-sense ideas. Doubtless there was a time when man obtained these by immediate intuition, and without the intermediary agency of reflection. But that time is past ; the pure light has been refracted in the prism of sin ; we lack the focus capable of re-assembling its rays, and common sense has not replaced intuition. If great and sublime things be still done in this world, it is not under the inspiration of common sense, but under some remnant of primitive light ; nor is it to common sense that we can refer them, since it is in its name that they are condemned. In the eyes of a multitude of persons, abnegation, humility, martyrdom, really lack common sense.

We do not very well see how the ideas that Christianity only has put forward, that it has bestowed on humanity, can be presented as the necessary premises of Christianity, or how we can only reach it by means of these ideas. *In point of fact*, many persons have known nothing of these prelimi-

naries, and have only met with natural religion in the bosom of revealed. *By right, or in principle*, we may easily understand how things should have happened thus, and that the revelation of the God of nature and the God of grace should very often have been only one and the same revelation.

If there were no obscurities, the heart would leave all to be done by the mind, which would suffice for all ; and the heart, thenceforth, having no part in that search after truth, which, as a search, is already a part of our possession, would leave man to strut about mournfully in the midst of those empty forms and abstract notions that he calls science.

A religion which should seem reasonable to all the world, could not be the true religion. At this general assent granted without resistance, I perceive that God has not spoken, the seal is not removed, the light has not dawned ; I must still expect.

So long as with his reason only man shall mount the hill of Calvary and walk around the cross, there can but be for him obscurity in the divine work of expiation. He may remain for ages in the contemplation of the mysterious fact without ever attaining to raise its veil. Why, how indeed should reason, cold reason, understand any part of that bitter cup drunk to the dregs by innocence itself ; of that mercy which displays itself in the severity of punishment ; of that shedding of blood without which we are told there is no remission ? Reason will not, I dare affirm, take one single step towards the comprehension of

this divine mystery, until, throwing aside ungrateful speculations, it remits the task of concluding the affair to one more skilful than itself. This more skilful one is the heart, which fixes itself entirely upon the love that shines forth from the work of redemption, concentrates itself without diversion upon the devotedness of the adorable victim, and allows the natural impressions of this love to penetrate freely and develop itself at leisure within it. O then, how rapidly all veils are torn, and all shadows vanish away ! how little difficult is it for him who loves to conceive of love ! how natural it seems that God, who is infinite in all things, should be infinite too in compassion ! How, on the other hand, inconceivable it appears that human hearts should be unable to feel the beauty of a work, without which God would not be wholly manifested ! How one wonders at the blindness of those who read, and re-read the Scriptures, without comprehending their central truth ; who pass and repass by an entirely divine love, without perceiving, without acknowledging, a work entirely divine !

There are very few diamonds that are perfectly pure, there are still fewer truths that are perfectly clear. The union of our soul and our body is a mystery ; our most familiar sentiments, our affections are a mystery ; the action of thought and will is a mystery ; our very existence is a mystery. Why do we admit all these different facts ? Is it that we understand them ? No, certainly, but because they

are self-evident, and that we live by them. We have no other method to follow in religion. We must ascertain if religion be true, necessary; and once satisfied on those two heads, we must submit as do the angels, to the necessity of ignorance, in some particulars.

In the domain of thought, to be able to assign God's part and our own is what religion teaches. Why should not the conviction that we must be partially ignorant be a portion of the truth; why should it not be one of the things that revelation was to teach us? To know that we cannot know is already knowledge. And this knowledge, by sparing us infinite mistakes, and confining ourselves to our own sphere, is the most precious of all.

Christianity is a positive religion, and a positive religion is only necessary because man is fallen. The religion of the normal man is natural; Adam's was so.

We might inquire, indeed, if his relation with God could be called religion. If he had any, it was so easy an intercourse with his Maker, such a unity between the voice from above and the voice of his own conscience, that the sentiment the first man had of himself was not more precise than that he had of God. Such a sentiment amounts to the possession of God. This Adam lost in sinning, for to sin was to halve his existence. From that moment natural religion came to an end, to be replaced by positive religion.

To this expression, positive religion, we attach that

of *revelation*. Before all, God *reveals* himself not so much by telling us as by showing us what he is.

When *superhuman* does not signify *divine*, it signifies *inhuman*.

When the incomprehensible is revealed, or when it is arrived at by strict reasoning, we may believe and affirm the incomprehensible ; but when a thing is not clear, it must at least be certain ; or if it be not certain, it must at least be clear.

One mystery does not explain another, but one mystery accepted should lead us to accept another. We accept, conquered by the evidence of the fact, that solidarity by virtue of which the sin of one has passed upon all. Having, then, accepted the mystery of condemnation, why should we not accept the mystery of grace, the fact that the virtue of one has passed, has overflowed on all ?

Far from denying that there are mysteries, it is of this very fact that religion would convince you ; in other terms, it would convince you that there are beyond those truths that are accessible to you, other truths the knowledge of which is denied you.

It does not matter that all should be explained, but it matters much that all should be justified. Neither religion nor philosophy could raise our faculty of knowing to a level with the infinite ; but all philosophy and all religions are bound to *edify* the conscience fully regarding the fact of this perpetual and formidable collision between physical good and evil, and moral good and evil.

Mystery is the true object of enthusiasm ; it is in all thinking the twilight that fascinates, the sap that intoxicates.

In all possible spheres, the light of the invisible, the absent made present, is the strength of the soul and of life. We should hardly hazard too much in saying that it is the starting-point of all action, since to act is to have the firm footing of the present and to lay our hand upon the future ; but at all events, it is most certain that faith is the source of all that bears in the eyes of men the character of force and dignity. Vulgar souls insist upon seeing, touching, feeling ; others have the eye of faith, and they are great.

It is perfectly possible that things of which we have never heard, may be true or may have been true. Before certain laws of the world were known, nothing could have appeared more absurd than the doctrine of the antipodes. Nay, take even in our own days those to whom these laws are not yet familiar, and you will hardly scandalize them more by saying that fire wets and water burns, than by telling them of the antipodes ; and yet you yourself believe in them more firmly than you believe in the sun rising to-morrow morning, for it is possible that the sun may not rise, whereas there will be antipodes so long as the world lasts.

The extraordinary must not be refuted merely on probability ; the extraordinary is not necessarily to be reduced to the absurd. No doubt, supernatural

facts are not to be lightly accepted ; but the negation of the principle of supernatural facts is in itself unreasonable. The only legitimate way of proceeding is to go straight to the fact, and to certify ourselves whether it took place or not.

What is religion ? God placing himself in relation with man, the Creator with the creature, the Infinite with the finite. Here we have mystery at once without going any further ; a mystery common to all religion, impenetrable in all. If, then, you are offended at whatever is mysterious, you are stopped on the threshold, I will not say of Christianity, but of all religion whatever,—even of that religion which is called *natural*, because it rejects miracles and revelations ; it must at least suppose some kind of relation, some communication between God and man, the contrary being equivalent to atheism. Your pretensions thus keep you out of the pale of all beliefs whatever ; and since you have not chosen to be Christians, it is not permitted you to be deists.

I own that if religion were only composed of comprehensible things, it would not be the true religion ; but it would not be any more a religion if it were composed only of things incomprehensible ; for religion is a virtue or it is nothing, a duty or it is nothing ; and what is virtue without conscience, or duty without thought ? Let all the rest then be incomprehensible in religion, I consent to it ; but this at least cannot be so. Good is not good if I cannot recognise it as good, nor evil evil unless I

can recognise it as evil. Take away this, the very name of religion disappears; there only remains that of fatality. Religion must bind me again to God; this is true; but it must be by my conscience, by the avowal of my conscience. All that binds me to God in any other way is not religion, else the animal surrendered to his instinct, the tree bending beneath the wind, the star that rolls in space, would have as much religion as I, would be religious beings too. If there be in religion anything that I ought to understand, it is doubtless the duty which is at the head of all my duties, and engenders them all.

It is impossible but that true religion should present a great number of mysteries. If it be true, it must teach us more truths regarding God and divine things than any other, or all others put together; but each of these truths corresponds with the infinite, and has therefore an outlet into mystery. How should it not be so in religion when it is so in nature itself?

Like the mountains, which throw vaster shadows the higher they are, the gospel is obscure and mysterious in proportion to its sublimity.

Each of the mysteries you would try to tear away from the system of our religion, would carry with it some one of the truths that directly concern your regeneration and salvation.

It is with mysteries as with the vessel that contains a medicinal draught; it is not the vessel that will cure you, but the draught, yet the draught could

only be presented to you in a vessel. Thus each saving truth is enclosed, is contained in a mystery which has in itself no saving virtue.

At last, as at first, you will not understand everything in the doctrine of the gospel. This is probably because you had necessarily to be saved by things that you could not comprehend. Is there any misfortune in that? Are you any the less saved? Does it become you to ask account from God of a remnant of obscurity which does not injure you, when he so prodigally showers light on all that is essential to you?

Love first; one day you shall know.

3. *The Bible and Christianity; Progress in Christianity.*

It is made a stumbling-block that the Bible should not have been so arranged as to render divisions impossible. . . . No doubt, that he who gave the Bible could have given a creed in its place, and the most perfect of all creeds. . . . But why should he have done so?—That man might not be obliged to enter immediately, and with his whole being, into relations with him? That the strict provision and the concentration of religious ideas, should dispense him from employing his conscience in the study? That nothing might put his uprightness and candour to the test? That he might receive the true meaning of the Bible ready made, and not

make use of the Bible to determine it? In a word, that he should remain passive there, where it is most important that his activity and liberty should be displayed, his responsibility engaged? God be praised, that it has not been so ordered, and that man is at once capable and bound to discover, through all the parts, all the personalities of which the Bible is composed, that general and eternal truth which only presents itself to him in the Bible, with a character in some sort occasional, under the form of an application, and always blended with some event or some life. God be praised that this our book has not the clearness of a symbol or creed; that we are not forced to comprehend it aright, and that we may give many meanings to his word. God be praised that he has left our activity some share in the acquirement of faith; and that, willing our belief to be an action, he has not added to the Bible, all-sufficient for simple hearts, the dangerous appendix of a symbolism.

We must not flatter ourselves with being faithful in proportion that we are literal; often we shall be so much the less so; and this is easily understood. We are very far from possessing an exact translation; and if in order to have the Word of God we must have the letter of that word, why, then, we do not possess God's word.

It is not in a chain of dry sentences that God reveals to us his will and the principles of his government; it is essentially by facts. In the book he

has given us, everything is history or everything is connected in history. It is sometimes said that this antique and oriental book refuses to assimilate itself with the modern forms of our thought. Oh! in this book of the human race, the local and the temporary disappear in the universal! Will you not believe the testimony rendered by the child? Without one aid of archæology, he understands the Bible as he does the talk of his playfellows. This language of the childhood of nations seems made for human children. But the child does better than understand; these exquisite narratives are his delight. Much is said about improving and explaining solemn truths; this is the favourite task of writers for children. But the Author of the Bible is their master in that as in all besides. Who could have so well spread honey on the edges of this cup offered to all men, at the bottom of which childhood finds nothing bitter? For it, everything in the divine chalice is honey. What book more attractive? What more glorious stores, what more dazzling marvel? Where was there ever gravity tempered with more grace, or grace accompanied by more gravity? Where was morality ever better exemplified in action? This whole book is the history of an education, a vast and sublime education—that of the human race; and the child receives it without need of being told so, as its one education.

The silence of the gospel on such and such a .

subject is not always a reason for our silence. The gospel contains all the truths necessary to salvation and the conduct of human life ; but of those truths some are explicitly contained therein, and others implicitly. The gospel could not say everything. Had it done so, preaching would have been superfluous, and by preaching I mean all those developments, applications, and explanations of which the gospel is susceptible ; the sermon is in this sense only one of the forms of preaching. If the gospel was to have said all, it never would have ended, never would end ; it would be constantly growing, and the world, to use the expression of St. John, " could not contain the books that should be written " (John xxi. 25).

The gospel would be much less perfect if it were more complete, much less eloquent if it said all, much less powerful if it were more scientific in its method and more strict in its language. We insist pertinaciously upon treating it as a book or a treaty, but it is neither a book, nor a treaty, nor a code. What, then, is it ? It is the gospel. It is a divine word, conceived and formularized so as to address the whole man, and consequently totally unlike that abstract method, that system of ideal distinctions, with which science cannot dispense ; nay, which constitutes science, but only touches the intellect, and cannot reach the man. All in the gospel is synthetic, complex, intermingled ; symmetry and material proportions are noticeable only in their

absence ; almost everything appears circumstantial and occasional. We have dialogues, allocutions, letters ; we should search in vain for that general and abstract character which appears to us more in conformity with the majesty of a universal religion ; and although there be in the gospel neither void nor superabundance, there is perhaps not one of us who does not feel surprised to meet there with certain things and not to meet with others. This is what the gospel should be, to give full scope to all our faculties, to leave much to be done by the logic of the heart and conscience, to make our religion indeed one of grace and liberty, in other words, a *spiritual obedience* ; the word *religion* has no other meaning. Now, such a compilation of the gospel as an analytical spirit might have conceived and desired, would have greatly hindered this admirable design of God.

On those points upon which we cannot avail ourselves of what the Bible says, a Christian may avail himself of what it does not say. It does not attempt to make of its silence an absolute limit to our thoughts ; beyond a certain line it refuses us its assistance, but that is all. That God who has himself responded to the most pressing questions of agonized humanity, puts to that humanity questions in presence of which he seems to leave it to itself. These questions are many and grave ; they issue from the centre of the globe, the centre of society ; and all that faith exacts from us is that we should make use of what has been revealed, to remain

firm and calm face to face with enigmas of which the Author of our faith has not seen fit to give us the solution.

God has sent the apostles, has caused a document to be written. But whence do you know this? it may be said. Probably from the same quarter that you yourselves do; it is enough that we should both be certain of it. But whence will those poor people know it who have no direct means of procuring themselves this certainty; and how would they know it if we were not there to attest it to them? And I may just ask, who will attest to them that you are there in order to attest it? Is it not necessary to have your authority guaranteed to them? And is this authority any easier to prove than that of Scripture? Besides, what a vicious circle! You have to prove yourselves the interpreters of Scripture, and you do so by means of passages of Scripture that have first of all to be interpreted. And who will interpret them? You? In virtue of what authority? In virtue of an authority that you can only have after those passages have been interpreted; you therefore have not this authority as yet. And who, then, has it? All the world. But if all the world has been able to interpret those passages, why should it not be equally able to interpret all the rest? This first moment is decisive; why do you leave it at the mercy of all the world? Why not take possession of it; why not, in the first instance, found your quality of interpreters upon some miracle

which forces conviction and prevents all objections? Unless you do this, it will cost the people as much trouble to assure themselves of your authority as to convince themselves of the authenticity of the Scriptures. Labour against labour, why should it not prefer the latter; or rather, why should it not dispense with both? Truth knows how to prove itself; and the same Providence that has preserved the sacred books, will doubtless know well how to demonstrate their divinity and explain their sense to sincere souls.

The people, childhood, men of all ages and all conditions, can only become Christians through the Bible. God's plan in Christianity proceeding from individuals to masses, not from masses to individuals, he has willed that each should receive religion from his divine hand immediately; that each should appropriate and apply the revealed dogmas to his own heart; that each should, on his own account, place himself in communication with the voice from on high; that each, humanly speaking, should make his own religion. According to this principle, the direct proof of which does not belong to our subject, the Bible is the library of each member of the whole family.

The Bible is the best teacher of rhetoric to the people. Do we not know that the language of this holy book has powerfully contributed to the beauty of modern tongues? What distinguishes the Bible from, and places it above, all literary masterpieces,

is that its beauties are not literary, that everywhere the thought has given the form, so that the union of thought and form was never so intimate elsewhere. The beauty of the biblical language, then, has everywhere something substantial, which attaches the mind immediately to the nature of things without permitting it to amuse itself by disguising it. One is struck at once without having had the time to enjoy, or almost to admire. It is also remarkable that the oriental language, so strange at first sight to the imagination of the West, should be at the same time so human, and consequently so universal, that it easily assimilates itself to all people, all forms of civilisation, all languages, far better than the language and literature of any century or any nation less removed could possibly do. All that in these holy books relates to man, all that paints man, is of unequalled depth and simplicity ; on these subjects the Bible has spoken a universal language, displayed a universal poetry ; the Bible was made in this respect, as in all others, to be the book of the human race.

“Atheists,” said Pascal, “ought to say nothing but what is perfectly clear.” I apply Pascal’s expression to our rationalists. Those who reject the Bible on account of the strange things it contains, commit themselves, as it seems to me, to proving that neither nature nor reason presents any similar singularity. There must be some advantage to account for their taking up their position on this last term ; and as

they have not as yet proved, either to themselves or to others, that their doctrine is best, they ought at least to prove that it is most clear. But if it should not be found more, nay, if it should be less so; if the mysteries of the Bible be plain compared to theirs; if, while remaining mysteries, those Bible-mysteries explain theirs; if to pass from the latter to the former should prove advancing to the light; if, by the *light of Christian mysteries*, all should connect, organize itself, all form one sequence in life and thought,—how then should an objection be based upon the strange things of the Bible; how not decide, upon reflection, that the marvel would be its containing no marvel; how believe that so unexpected a light should have nothing astonishing; how avoid seeing that, in laying down the idea of a revelation, you lay down that of a novelty; and in such a sphere, at such a depth, or, if you will, such a height, how should not the novelty be prodigious; how should the lever which heaves, displaces the world, have its fulcrum in that world; how should that which reveals us to ourselves fail to reveal to us something besides ourselves? I apply this to Genesis. Everything, it is said, is extraordinary therein; and this is what estranges. Why, this is rather what should attract. If Genesis were not extraordinary we ought to distrust it. The extraordinary may not indeed be true, but could the true here fail to be extraordinary? This circumstance that is complained of ought, then, to create in every

mind a prejudice in favour of the Bible ; a prejudice, —we say nothing more, but can less be accorded us?

If we read the Bible without any of the preconceptions to which modern science has given rise, read it with the eyes of an intelligent ignorance, we find that it is only one creation which is there summarily announced in the first verse, and detailed in the following. In our day these first words of the sacred book are read and understood in a different manner ; and I have some fear that, by dint of handling and moulding it as though it were wax, this text, that seemed so firm and so definite, should for a long while lose all kind of consistency. As soon as science brings forth a new system, or even reveals a new fact, we have Moses lending himself to it ; in the first instance he had said this, nothing but this ; but, if it be wished, he shall have said the contrary. We are here only alluding to an abuse ; we very willingly admit that a text and a fact may mutually serve as commentary, and that by means of the one the sense of the other may be cleared up and rectified. But do not let us forget that a text which has every meaning ends by having none, and let us be on our guard. In a word, the study of fossil strata has seemed to reveal different creations separated from each other by ages, and from that moment the “ days ” of which Moses speaks have become “ epochs.”

God, who has given up “ the world to our disputations,” God will one day bring order into the chaos

of our opinions on this difficult subject. He will say, as on the first day, "Let there be light," and there shall be light. But we must not anticipate, we must know how to wait. It is less dangerous, perhaps, to allow that the reconciliation is not yet brought about, than to wrest our own minds in wresting the text of Scripture. Perhaps the narrative of Moses was not to be a mere written exposition of facts; his special aim, or rather the aim of Him who made him write this cosmogony, seems to have been the proclaiming the unity and personality of the creative principle. The chronology of creation had not for Moses, and ought not to have for us, as much interest as belongs to the promulgation of a truth so simple to our eyes as Christians, and so inaccessible to all those who had not Moses for their prophet,—the truth that God is a person, and that man, his image, his representative in the midst of creation, is at the same time the creation's true end.

"Can we by searching find out God?" inquires a sacred writer. Let us enter fully into this sentiment, let us renounce the understanding of subjects that transcend our understanding; let us be simply children, in the Christian acceptation; at bottom, good sense, instinct, conscience, deceive us less often, and lead us further, than is supposed; a simple heart is a great science.

There is agreement only on one point,—that of seeking in the Bible not the ideas of the Bible, but the only incontrovertible authority for the ideas we

entertain, and which a human name would not sufficiently protect. It is thus that we play (for which of us is quite innocent in this particular?) with the one only meaning of this immutable word. We must allow that we cannot manage a symbolism quite so easily. . . . In this consists the peculiarity and usefulness of a confession of faith.

No; Scripture cannot serve as a law. Scripture has in itself but one sense; who doubts it? But historically it has many. This is proved by the diversity and multiplicity of sects and Churches, each of which rests on a meaning assigned to Scripture to the exclusion of all others. Every particular Church represents one meaning of the Bible.

In compiling a symbolism, one can only want something *more* or something *less precise* than the Bible. A symbolism more precise than the Bible is, like all other symbolisms, a formula that restricts the freedom of religious teaching more than the Bible would: we are but returning to the old errors. As to a symbolism less precise than the Bible, what is it but a mere contradiction, for it is just in order to be more precise that it was written.

The Christian is passive with regard to Christianity; he is the soft wax which receives the impression. It is in the gospel that we have the first impressions; but the successive impressions, the proofs taken from this seal in the course of ages, awaken a lively interest.

There would be too much to say on the *progress*

in the manner of comprehending and feeling Christianity. Applied to the life of the individual, these expressions offer no difficulty ; if the life of society is spoken of, we equally conceive that, as regards application, Christianity must be even better *comprehended*, and that each step taken by humanity on its way, like each step of the traveller in a beautiful country, must reveal a new site in the same horizon. As to the manner of feeling Christianity, we only know one, which is found at once, and once for all, at the foot of the Saviour's cross. We know not whether there will ever be more holy souls than there have been, but most certainly they will never feel Christianity in a different way from the holy souls of olden time ; and we may observe in passing, that we do not expect that there will ever be, either in thought or heart, any one more *humanitarian* than the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Whatever is not ancient is not true, for we have not to make a new gospel. And, on the other hand, what is not new, that is to say, adapted to the intellectual form, the tendencies, and the wants of each epoch, is not completely true either.

If truth, taken in itself, be one and immutable, its human expression, at all events, is not so. Truth puts on from age to age different forms, the diversity of which only brings out her secrets the better. It is even useful that these forms should renew themselves at certain epochs, in order that the Church may, as it were, understand itself the more

completely. While admiring an ancient confession, we may nevertheless acknowledge that we should not express ourselves exactly in the same way at present; that we should say more or less, or something else; we may feel the need of bringing our words nearer to our thoughts, and when a natural opportunity arises of so doing, it is a duty to lay hold of it.

III. THE CHURCH OF THE PRESENT DAY.

1. *Revivals.*

The religious revival, the beauty of which no one is less disposed to ignore than ourselves, will be more celebrated in the future for frankness of affirmation than courage of application or even boldness of thought. It has been far from drawing all the conclusions that flow from its premises; nay, we are not afraid of saying that many amongst the most important of these have escaped its attention. Do you learn in a general way that there has been a revival in any place, that Christianity is re-animated, that faith has become living, and that zeal abounds,—do not ask in what soil, in what system, these precious plants grow. You may be sure beforehand that it is in the rough and rugged soil of orthodoxy, under the shade of those mysteries which confound human reason, and that it would so gladly keep at bay.

One understands what a Christianity must be, which, in any sense whatever, speaks to us of *re-*

vival. It will not, most certainly, be Christianity of the fashion of the eighteenth century, nor a scholastic Christianity. It will be a Christianity which, looking upon birth in a Christian land, baptism, and the external habits of religion as morally providential preparations,—sees in all mankind, whether savage or civilized, baptized or unbaptized, merely sinners to be renewed, and dates in the case of each the quality of the Christian from the hour of conversion. One cannot say that such a Christianity is new ; on the contrary, it is very ancient, but its formula stated in these terms is, nevertheless, pretty new. We have, however, within us something—not indeed our reason, since nothing is more rational—but something opposed to this : the idea of living upon funds laid up for us, as it were upon our father's savings, is not without its charms. All the revivals of the last thirty years have been an open protestation against this secret pretension. The pretension itself seems at present about to erect itself into a system ; it is probable that the protestations against it will not be lacking. The doctrine of the *opus operatum* will meet on its way with that of the *opus operandum*.

We can fully believe that there is truth in the ideas brought forward in favour of local and instantaneous revivals, and we should be among the first to feel roused by the sight of a whole people arising like one man to return to the Lord. But we also believe that *system* here runs the risk of spoiling everything.

In a time like ours, when the shaken social world can only be re-established upon strong convictions, the chances are all in favour of either orthodoxy or unbelief. Medium doctrines, too Christian for philosophers, too philosophical for Christians, will always inspire less confidence. They will not in general have strong men for adherents; strong men will be Christians, or the contrary; an intermediate position will not suit them. I speak as a man; "forgive my boldness." The time is come for being decided in religion, as in everything else.

This so-called *methodism*, the object of our earnest respect, is only Christianity trying to be consistent. Here, after all, lies its glory and its crown; here, too, let us not shrink from adding, lies its strength.

With more or less willingness or reluctance, methodists are all *individualists*.

All other Christianity, however exact, however sincere it may be, has ended its career. Christianity purged from methodist consequences, by the very fact of being thus purged, would be much less comprehended than that which is called methodistical; this last being more connected, more complete, more active, is decidedly better suited to an age which unites the spirit of system to the genius for action; the same logical *consequence* which alarms certain men to-day, is just what will attract them to-morrow; the same principle gives Christianity to the adherents and adversaries. It is therefore to this faith that our age will return, if it return to faith at

all ; but in no case will it content itself with an interrupted Christianity, stopping short at an arbitrary limit.

Our Dissenting Churches on the trunk of the National Church resemble fungi on a rotten tree.

We have perhaps deprived the religious revival of some of its simplicity and truth ; we have more or less removed it from the type indicated by evangelical wisdom, by constantly appealing to the Reformers, that is to say, to their symbolism. We have not stopped far short of applying to those venerable and precise, but human formulas, the grand biblical watchword, "To the law and the testimony." These formulas are not the Reformation ; they are only, if we may so speak, its doctrinal summary and abstract result. Still less do these formulas represent to us the men of the Reformation,—the general tenor of their lives, and their actions taken as a whole, constituting a broader and more living symbolism, and a more generous dogmatic. This life reflects the gospel much more brightly than does any symbolism, and in the midst of a thousand weaknesses we seem to read there *an imitation of Jesus Christ*, fairer and more faithful than any book that may bear that title. This is what we want now-a-days. The view of the Reformation will lead us higher, as the banks of a stream, perseveringly followed, take us back to its source. Men of the religious movement, members of that new Church which gradually extracts itself from out the midst of all the Churches,

may have sometimes incurred the reproach addressed in matters of literature to the unreflecting partisans of classical learning. It has been said to these, What you have to learn from these masters is to imitate their master, nature; this is the only lesson you need ask from the ancients. Why should we not say to those pious and zealous men now in question, The Reformation was a holy and a blessed work, because bent on deriving itself from the eternal gospel alone; it would not consent on any question to admit lower authority; in order to imitate the Reformation, you must not stop short at it, but return at one bound, and without transition, to the pure and wide source of all truth. Then your work will take a character, and develop effects which it has not yet obtained; then you will be in better keeping, better adapted to the especial wants of your own time, by the very fact that you will be so, by anticipation, to the wants of all time; for to place yourselves on a level with the century and with coming centuries, you must rise to the height of Jesus Christ; then your activity will be more flexible and more comprehensive; less offensive to the prejudices of the period; more intelligent and more intelligible, in a word, more human; then many barriers that you do not even see will fall at your feet, and perhaps your work will gradually gain something of that seasonable character, a measure of that popularity, which was so largely granted to the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

The religious revival of our days has connected itself in some countries with a very precise and formal dogmatism ; and people have been slow to perceive how such dogmatism bordered on rationalism, or at all events, how easily it led thither ; how much consequently it exposed us to the dangers of substituting the system of man for the plan of God, and subordinating the works of God to the ideas of man ! Many of the most boasted results have been found out on trial to be but artificial, many improvements illusory, many conversions *evolutions* of the natural man ; finally, what was taken for life has too often left at the bottom of the alembic nothing but a certain fervour of dialectic ; a mania for logical sequence, a party spirit impregnated with asceticism ; in a word, it has been manifest that many even among the ignorant (for the ignorant were constrained to dogmatism) were Christians, only upon the same title, and in the same sense, that men are Platonists or Stagyrates. The severity of this language may surprise and pain some ; but we depend upon the final concurrence of all those who, while blessing God for the impulse given in our times to the moral world, are disposed candidly to allow the portion of humanity, that is to say, the portion of error and weakness, traceable in it.

A religious revival, when it is earnest, when it spreads and endures, is sure to irritate more or less all those that it has not included.

In a certain degree, the revival was Puritan, it

could not have been otherwise ; and although the practice was not in general on a level with the theory, there have certainly been fair relations between the theory and its application.

To sum up then : the revival has restored to Christianity that character of foolishness which it has at certain times assumed ; and with us at least it has not for a long time had. The revival has aimed at making of the spirit of Christians a quite special, quite exceptional quality, and of those collectively who possessed it, a race apart, another humanity. If in Christianity, together with its more special elements, there are others in the appreciation and adoption of which all men may unite as men, and ideas which harmonize with those of natural philosophy and blend with those of modern civilisation, little pains have been taken to bring out these ; there has seldom been any descent from the heights into the plain ; more has been done than was necessary to get rid of the notion of its being possible to be a Christian without becoming one, or of becoming one without being miraculously renewed by a quite special grace.

The revival has preached the total depravity of man, and his total powerlessness to know and possess by and of himself the sovereign good of which sin has deprived him ; the revival has preached salvation by grace and not by works, the necessity of a new birth in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and the absolute dependence of man with

regard to God. The revival has preached the plenary and essential divinity of Jesus Christ, as well as his entire and perfect humanity ; it has declared that God was in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto himself ; that it is in Jesus Christ alone that we have remission of sins and access to the Father ; and that whosoever abideth not in him, abideth in death.

If the form came of itself, it would not be delayed ; it would find plenty of opportunities. It is delayed because the flesh is weak or slow, as much as the spirit is ready ; and in order to find we must have sought it. The tortoise (we adopt this illustration) has necessarily, and without care or trouble, a shell that fits it ; its house grows upon it. Man, on the contrary, builds his ; and the labour of the architect, who chooses the materials and arranges their place and purpose, precedes the work of the mason, who hews and connects them. Now, man is man, and not tortoise ; and the illustration of the tortoise or snail is all on the side of our cause.

The error to which I call attention is a grave one. I appeal to facts. It has banished the teaching of morality from the evangelical pulpit. To the error of those preachers who asked from death the manifestations and actions of life, has succeeded another error ; it has been said, ‘ Believe, the rest will come of itself ;’ for I will not speak of those who have said, ‘ Believe, all the rest is nothing.’ It has been supposed that life would find its form without seek-

ing for it; whereas it should have been said that life would seek out its form and find it, and that it is precisely by this that we recognise it to be life. Little care has been taken to prove what is acceptable to God. What has been the result? That a very great number of things acceptable to him have been omitted, that many others have been allowed which can only displease him. Compared with the morality of the world, the morality of the revival may have seemed severe; compared with its principle, it was loose. Would it have been equally so if we had thought that the use of life was not to suppress study and labour, but to throw light on the former and animate the latter? "I have seen," says the Psalmist, "an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Ps. cxix. 96). Who, judging from the majority of our sermons, would suspect this?

Life is love, and we shall only love a God who loves us, and we shall only believe ourselves loved of God, when he shall, by a miracle of mercy, have lowered himself to us. He has done so in the person of his Son, who is God manifested in the flesh, God with us,—Immanuel. This intimate, indissoluble, eternal union of divinity with humanity, by which God sacrifices himself—for there is already a complete sacrifice in the incarnation—this is what we have to teach *above all*, but it is not *all* we have to teach. Religion is but a morality sown in the soil of grace; it must be cultivated, and every theo-

logian who is not a moralist is but half a theologian, if, however, there can be any half where division is inconceivable.

It is because the doctrine of free salvation has taken possession of religious teaching in our country that there has been a revival, and this revival has been one of heart and conscience as well as faith ; it has spread from thought to life. Those who have shared in it have found that for them the kingdom of God did not consist in words, but works ; and, in the midst of much weakness and inconsistency, wisdom, who is always justified of her true children, has shown that she had some among us. I will not, however, go so far as to say that a greater perfection of life and manners among Christians would not have been the consequence of a more thorough study of the perfect law, nor that the doctrine of justification would not have borne more beautiful fruit, have been better understood, and more feelingly grasped, if that of sanctification had been given it as its perpetual commentary.

Our mind, and still more our heart, is like a vessel that shrinks, in order, one is tempted to say, to avoid containing the whole of truth. Some of this divine fluid ever escapes, overflowing the edge of the vessel, without reckoning, alas, all we lose through its cracks. The *antinomianism*, which has been—why should we not say so?—one of the weaknesses of our revival, and one of the defects of our revival preaching, has involuntarily and unconsciously ren-

dered subordinate, and thrown into the background, the dogma of repentance considered as a condition of salvation.

Conscience is the fulcrum of the great religious movement of which we are witnesses, and it is the only one, indeed, it can have in an epoch like ours, as well as the only solid base that religion can obtain. This does not imply that religion is all conscience; but it must be this in the first instance, and this is what, in the present day, we see it to be wherever the Spirit of God is working.

2. Present State of Christianity.

The good one derives from religion is, not to be approved of men or powerful, nor even to walk in peaceful ways; the good of religion is to be religious. All that does not spring from and strengthen this principle is not a good but an evil.

Christianity has always been, but it is now more than ever, in the position of a garrison which can only save itself by sorties; now, in a State Church, sorties are impossible.

Every attempt at a rigorous and logical application of evangelical doctrine can only make its way through breakers, whether the subject in question be the arrangement of the State, the Church, or the Family. The believer, in his relation to Jesus Christ, bears within himself the characters of the Church, he is a summary of it; so much so, that if, by a

decree of God, humanity should find itself suddenly reduced to two individuals, of whom one was believing, the other infidel, nothing would be changed but number, and these two individuals would completely represent, in their relation to Jesus Christ, the world and the Church; for if the Church be in the eyes of Jesus Christ a single person, that he calls his bride, nothing would be changed in that particular; there would still be a person in whom Jesus Christ would dwell, and whom he would continue to call his bride. What would have vanished would be the association, the community, but all the rest would remain. Well, what would then be evident, what would then manifest itself, exists at the present time in disguise; even now the believer stands in the same relation to Christ as the Church does; even now the believing soul is, as well as the whole Church, the bride of Christ.

Yes! each age in its turn strikes thee, Oh Christ; but it is the peculiarity of this age to do this while saluting thee; it no longer gives itself the trouble to hate; it finds no subject for hatred, for we only hate what we fear, and fear only what we have measured.

Just as the conservation of the individual man is a continually renewed creation, so the existence of Christianity on earth is a perpetual birth. It is with it as with its Head, "Except a grain of wheat die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit." Continually to die, in order to be con-

tinually born : such is its law, such its force. To die, that is to say, to separate itself continually from all strength that does not spring from its principle, to abdicate beforehand and at every moment the empire of this world, to live only its own peculiar life, and to receive this day by day, minute by minute, from Him from whom it emanates. It appertained but to carnal habits of mind to desire, in the midst of the glory of Tabor, to prepare a tabernacle for glorified spirits, and to say, "It is good that we should be here." Truth does not even need a tent ; it will be established within our hearts alone, and it is only faith and love that have the right to offer it an asylum.

No religion on earth will succeed to Christianity ; outside of it, man will only be able to believe in one thing,—death.

To foretell a peaceful future to a religion is to slander it ; it is to affirm that it has nothing to teach man, no sacrifices to require from him, no homage to claim ; or else it is to pay man the exorbitant honour of declaring him prepossessed in favour of the law of perfection, and prepared to fulfil it ; for I will not suppose, since you speak of religion, that you have in view anything short of perfection.

It is because Christianity demands that man should be perfect, that is to say, that he place his whole will at the command of the divine will, that it has sown more divisions and controversies on earth than any other religion. . . .

Christianity is the religion of God falling like lightning in the midst of the religions of men; in other words, of the human *Ego*, differently transformed and disguised. It is God willing to occupy the central place in man, instead of the man himself. It is the most enormous and exorbitant of claims if it be not divine. It is asking from man a fundamental revolution in himself. It is the right of God opposed to human passions, and man put in a position to choose between his passions and God's right. But it is also something else, and let this be noted: Christianity has a beauty which has seized on all minds; some adore it, others reject; others again, and this is the greatest of evils, while inwardly rejecting, decorate themselves with it outwardly. Religion well learned by rote, well *repeated*, becomes the cloak of ambition, cupidity, tyranny; in a word, at the apparition of Christianity all passions start from their hiding-places, and, taking widely different orbits, wheel madly around this sun. All, whether good or evil, that was latent in the heart of man makes an effort to issue from it, and rushes out into life. All the forces of human nature dilate and take possession of space. . . . Christianity, in the life of the world, has been a crisis that has determined all the wickedness of human nature to the surface; but beneath this outbreak, as beneath some noisome exhalation, blessings have germinated, and the tree of salvation has shot out its branches heavenward, and borne up to God in its rich foliage a

perfume of holiness and adoration such as earth had never before known.

The world treats truth as it does Jesus Christ; it does not absolutely deny, it diminishes it. This is its prestige; it is thus it dazzles the majority of men, and especially, no doubt, those that wish to be dazzled. . . . Its falsehoods are reticences, and would be much less dangerous, or even not dangerous at all, were they pure falsehoods.

There is a Christianity which is, correctly speaking, nothing more than the other side of worldliness; there is a *Christian world*, which is world all over, and into which the whole spirit of the older world has been imported; just as, from a house that threatened to fall, one would carry whatever one could into a new house. It is true that the furniture of the old house does not appear to have been made for the new, and is very ill-adapted to it, but one can always make a shift, and at the end of a certain time house and furniture seem to suit very well. To be sure, some pieces of furniture were too large to be got in; these we were obliged to leave out, but enough remains, and, on the whole, one has a comfortable home feeling. In the same way, certain sins, certain bad habits, were incompatible with the Christian arrangement of life, but, after all, the door was found wide enough for the most essential things,—I mean those with which the natural man will on no account consent to part. It must be confessed that in the same way as, for certain classes of the worldly,

to be in good society implies the doing politely what is done grossly elsewhere, so, for certain Christians, to be Christian signifies the being censorious, selfish, sensual—with certain people, under certain forms, and in a certain language. It is but putting on another uniform under the same master, singing the same song to another tune, indulging securely the same weaknesses and passions we only indulged tremblingly before ; it is sacrificing one portion of our tastes to save another.

We must not disguise it from ourselves : the spirit of the age gains upon us. This age, which delights to call itself practical, material or positive (as though spirit were less positive than matter), has by slow degrees infected us with its cold poison. Thanks to its influence, Christianity has become narrow, timid ; and this character reveals itself even in the works by which it endeavours to remount to the traditions of its first youth. You ask why it is not as expansive as it once was ; ask the river whose springs refuse their waters why it no longer overflows the plains. It is because the storms that accumulate treasures of ice and snow on the summit of the mountains have become of rare occurrence around those far-off sources. So, too, at the summit of our life there are no more storms ; everything is tranquil ; nothing violent, nothing heaves itself boldly above the vast level of the morality of the many ; in short, that tragic element inherent in the essence and the very idea of Christianity (for Christianity, which begins by a

miracle, is miraculously continued), has so little place in the mind of the Christian of our days that certain startling facts of history offend them nearly as much as they do other men. . . . With a little philosophy, aided by somewhat of dogmatism, we make light of these pious heroisms. I will not discuss them. I grant that the form may have been vicious, and even that, in point of doctrine, the substance may have been scarcely less so ; but is there nothing true in those works ? Take them as mere symbols, and tell us if there are any more beautiful ?

Christianity in this commonplace age tends to become commonplace. The tragic element essential to it is gradually disappearing.

3. The Future of Christianity.

Christianity is young as at the first day, and, in its immortal hope, ever ready to begin anew. Who knows if one of those great popular successes obtained from epoch to epoch, be not reserved for it at a not distant future ? If its disciples go on understanding their age better and better, accept it with increasing frankness, listen to it, reply to it,—if they no longer offer it theology instead of the religion it needs, nor insist on seeing the force of Christianity there where it is not,—if they have the courage to be of their own time, in the Christian sense that expression can bear,—if, in a word, they are what their predecessors have been in every epoch at which Christi-

anity has become popular, the world once more is promised them, is delivered up to them.

By liberty to unity!—such will be the motto of Christianity. This idea contains a whole world.

There are everywhere throughout Christendom, even in the midst of a heathenism that appals, some remnants of that imitative or second-hand Christianity which does not indeed save or renew, but which contains a portion, an emanation of truth, and consequently some of “the promises of the life that now is.” God is very merciful, and although it be true that from them that have not he takes away even that they have, yet he does not do this all at once.

We may boldly predict that Christianity cannot rise in the world to its due rank, and to the authority delegated to it; nay even it cannot preserve itself except on condition of becoming extraordinary. If we are stopped here by being reminded that it is one article of faith that Christianity cannot perish, that there is a promise made to the Church that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” we reply, we know this, we are not forgetful of it; but this in no way weakens what we have said. The condition has been foreseen together with the result, the means decreed as well as the end; Christianity is not to perish because the element of the extraordinary which essentially belongs to it will not perish, but were it possible that element could disappear, nothing would prevent Christianity from disappearing too.

It is into the desert that our aspirations would

urge the Churches ; it is there that waters will burst forth for them from the rock, the manna fall from heaven, and thither that a crowd of Egyptians will follow them, not to destroy, but to range themselves, some sincerely, others externally, under the laws of the Moses of the new covenant.

The glance of the Christian turns, as do all glances, towards that desert that now separates us from the promised land. He thrills with hope and terror at sight of those burning solitudes, where "the cloudy, fiery pillar" has not yet distinctly appeared. The present epoch excites his attention in the highest degree, for never has there been one like it in the world. Never did so universal, anxious, and earnest an expectation take possession of any age. Never was the thought of the future so present to all minds, even the most commonplace and frivolous. Never did a vessel undertake, under more formidable auspices, a more perilous voyage. Not a breeze is stirring ; the soul of the moral world seems to hold its breath ; the vessel appears destined to row laboriously over a leaden sea ; creeds have been left behind on the shore ; humanity has said to matter : "Make us gods to go before us ;" and these gods, like those of the nations of old, are of wood and metal, fire and water. But the Christian is full of hope. All this is not the future, but the condition of the future, the process of renovation. Matter is preparing a new world for spirit, a new soil for truth, a new shape for the gospel, on which

it will display the fertile variety of its forms and agencies, and the immutability of its principles. It is not allowed to the Christian either to rejoice without trembling, or to tremble without rejoicing.

The Christianity of apostles and martyrs, not that of philosophers and liberals—Christianity, such as John Huss preached it four centuries ago, and St. Paul eighteen—rises once more from the catacombs of oblivion, and, ancient as it is, appears young and fresh in the midst of the obsolete things of yesterday and the day before. It prepares itself to gather into its arms, at the close of a war which may perhaps last long, bruised and bleeding society. What will become of us if it do not come to our aid? All the world unites in half this question of ours, for all the world feels that aid is necessary. Ask philosophers; they admit that it is necessary, at any cost, to leave negations, and enter into the sphere of affirmative truths, which are the only fertile ones. But where, save in Christianity, are those to be found?

Christianity is always hated when it is not despised. The toleration accorded it does not contradict this assertion, if this toleration be rooted in contempt. Christianity, thoroughly known, is hateful or adorable; and I have seen some souls fluctuate long between hatred and adoration; and however obscure or sheltered, or prudent or happy, a Christian may be, he must always be in some measure exposed to this hatred. But it is a sin to

court it ; we must, “as much as lieth in us, live peaceably with all men.” And it is a great absurdity to measure our Christian worth by the hatred we excite ; hate is not so exact about proportion. Besides, we must take care to certify ourselves that it is Christ that is hated in us, and not we that are hated in Christ.

Christians have only been sent into the world for dangers and battles. It is good for them continually to see around their dwellings the smoke of the enemy’s camp ; their faith, courage, and patience get practised in such glorious encounters ; whereas the same virtues grow torpid and die out in the absence of dangers. Churches that were too rich, too peaceful, and too well protected, have all fallen into torpor and lukewarmness.

The normal condition of Christianity is neither absolute trouble nor absolute peace ; it does not permanently require peace ; God gives it in order to refresh it, but a long calm might be fatal ; Christianity needs disturbance and tempest.

The Church must have a new age of heroism ; and if she does not, as at other epochs, find all the elements of it ready-made in the ardent and frantic hate of kings and nations ; if that arena be lacking to her she must find another ; she, whom the Spirit of God has sometimes taught to find peace in war, must at the present time learn to find war in the midst of peace. . . . The human soul seems vacant. In the midst of the grand spectacles which man

creates for himself, he is weary. He knows not beforehand indeed all that he may do, may see, but he already knows all he shall feel; has he not already felt it, and, as it were, exhausted it at the first stroke? Christianity, in the midst of so many effete things, is the only one that is new, youthful, inexhaustible. Christianity is the eternal youth of the human race, but it is only this on condition of its being Christian, that is to say, extraordinary.

There is still, no doubt, a people of God; but this people, formed by the voluntary association of believing souls, is less the work than the result of the work,—the sum of the conquests of the divine monarch, a means of preserving, confirming, and multiplying them. Were there only one Christian on the earth, he would far more engage the attention of the Most High than the whole remainder of the human race; and if any one wishes to know what value a single soul is of in the eyes of its Maker, let it be remembered that there is more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.

Piety, the sincerity of which is proved, is the thing most respected, perhaps the only thing respected. Christianity, spite of the contempt affected for it, is still the most powerful of all things, perhaps the only powerful. It is not Christianity that is weak, but Christians.

So long as in Christendom itself (I leave the

heathens out of the account) true believers shall be in the minority, so long will there be struggle and suffering. The Church has not struck its roots into the soil of worldly interests. She is very propitious to them, it is true. She serves them without their knowing it; but she proceeds from the spirit, not the flesh; from heaven, not earth; from God, not man. She does not present herself as the ally and accomplice, but as the enemy of human passions; and the first intention she announces is, not of enriching, but despoiling us. There is not only enmity between her and the vices of the world, but between her and its virtues. The wise who have not her wisdom hate her no less than do the foolish; they hate her as foolish. Eternally a stranger in the world, despite appearances (for it is not she but her shadow that receives the homage of the multitude), she is constantly obliged to conquer the place she occupies; she lives, if one may so speak, not on an assured revenue, but on the booty she captures day by day; she is not established in the world, but only encamped,—her very existence is always endangered; and while every man, in coming into the world, belongs to society, none belongs beforehand to the Church,—she has no citizens but such as she snatches from the world. Hardly, indeed, can she be said to live; her life is a perpetual resurrection; she is for ever issuing from the tomb. By force of truth, and consequently of harmony with the nature of things and the nature of man, she has

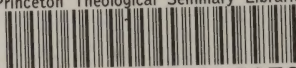
imposed on modern nations several of her maxims, a new civilisation, and even her own name; and perhaps, indeed, the time may not be far distant when, in a certain sense, the whole world will be Christian; but even then it will not be the fundamental principles, but the secondary ideas, the applications of Christianity, that the world will have adopted. . . . The truths which are at the base of the faith of the Church will be none the less contrary and odious to the natural man; and while that natural man, of whom even the Christian so long finds some remnant within himself, shall form the majority in this world, so long, it is evident, must the Church fight, struggle for its very life, and suffer, therefore, even as its Head suffered.

What idea must those form of the condition of the Church, what understanding can they have of its principles, or what conception of the relation of the body to the head, and the limbs to the body, who deliberately relegate to the first period of Christianity, as to an heroic and almost fabulous age, all that there is of tragical in the religion and in its profession? Do they wish, for really there is no other alternative, do they then wish it to be said that Christianity has begun by tragedy, and continued as comedy? Every life that seeks its principle elsewhere than in material interests, can only be a conflict; and what is Christianity but the supreme life, and, therefore, the supreme conflict also,—the conflict with all its earnestness, all its

dangers, all its anguish, all its persistence, all its bleeding horror?

It is our strength, as well as our duty, to hope. God wills that we believe all things possible, yea, even in this our world, grown old, the possibility of the glory and the force of earlier days.

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